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# ***record guide***

NOVEMBER, 1961

**AN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL OF OPINION**



*Andor Foldes*



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# The American Record Guide

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for NOVEMBER, 1961

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# A mania to own

By HAROLD C. SCHONBERG

MADRID

THE HABIT of collecting pursues and collects the collector, following him from city to city, country to country. Who is the master, who the mastered? Can one ever relax thinking that in a strange town might be that missing book, that long-sought-after record, the painting that will just fill the gap in the living room (and might even turn out to be a Velasquez or Vermeer; stranger things have happened)?

The answer is, of course, no. And so this music-cum-record collector — fortunately our group is small, which means that bargains still can turn up—happily follows his evil spirit, churning up the dust in all the flea markets of Europe, the little music stores, even the radio stations. Each country, of course, has its specialties. If a collector is interested in zarzuela music, Spain is naturally the place. Italy is full of operatic disks, and Paris equally full of encounters with operatic scores—in French, Rossini in French, Verdi in

*No old subscriber needs to be told that the distinguished chief music critic of The New York Times is an alumnus of this magazine, which he served with distinction over an aggregate of nineteen years. He is still a zealous record collector, as this article proves beyond doubt. It appeared first in the Sept. 10th editions of The Times, with whose kind permission it is reprinted here for the delight of those who missed it.*



The flea markets of Paris (Photos courtesy French Embassy Press and Information Service and French Government Tourist Office)



French, Mussorgsky in French. But also French opera in French, and that is worth looking for.

### Buried Treasures

The big houses are not the place to look. One seeks out second-hand stores in rundown sections. In Paris is a *boutique de musique* (no, we won't give the address) that is simply unbelievable. Operatic scores are piled helter-skelter from floor to ceiling in a layer of virginal dust that probably has not been disturbed since the Franco-Prussian War. A husband and wife run the place; they cheerfully admit that they have not the least idea of what most of their stock consists. So you take off your coat, roll up your sleeves and start looking. All the Massenet operas; all the Gounod operas; all the Offenbach operettas, many appearing to be first editions. The operas of Reyer (who wants 'em?) and Auber and even a few by Philidor. Most of these go for thirty or forty cents apiece. Occasionally a higher price is asked, such as \$1.50 or so for the Dukas opera, "*Ariane et Barbebleu*."

The place to look for disks is in the flea market of Paris or Rome, or the rastro in Madrid. These flea markets are outdoor marts, and in most of them there generally will be a few tables with disks stacked on them. Most of these disks are junk, and one has to sift through piles upon piles in the hope that the 1905 Sarasate will be there (it was, in Madrid) or the 1903 Edouard de Reszke or, if the gods

are smiling, even the semi-mythical Jean de Reszke disk, the granddaddy of all collector's items, only two copies of which are known to exist.

### Half the Fun

You are told never to pay the price asked by the flea-market dealer. Tourists, you are warned, are considered fair game. You are also told that half the fun is in bargaining. But how can one bargain when the price of a record is twenty-five cents or less? Anyway, the last time we bargained, in the Rome flea market when confronted with a lovely, old edition of Schumann songs, the dialogue went something like this:

We: "How much?"

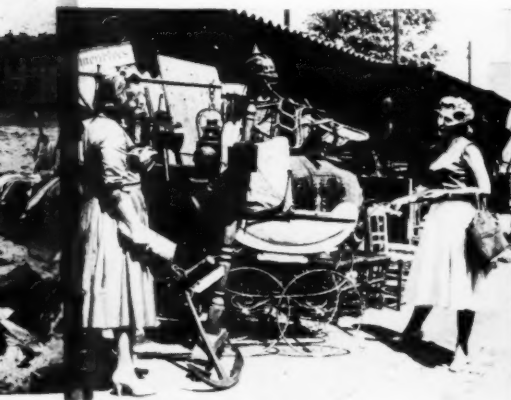
Dealer: "Twelve hundred lire."

We: "I'll give you eight hundred."

Dealer: "Goo'by."

And he meant goo'by. He was insulted, and he showed it. He went back to his work without even looking up. We stood there for a while, shifting from leg to leg, a vacuous smile on our face, and then, finally, we sneaked away.

In most flea markets, old phonograph records—no matter who the artist or what the label—are sold for virtually nothing. Five cents, ten cents, that is about all. Sometimes they go as high as a quarter. Not that most old records are expensive anywhere. Even in the United States the majority of Carusos and Galli-Curcis are not worth much more than flea-market prices to a dealer. But there are certain



items that command high prices, up to \$25 and more; and these can occasionally be picked up for pennies at the flea markets. Not in Paris, though. Those boys know what's what.

### Discovery

We were going through a stack of piano disks in the Paris flea market, most of them—standard items by Paderewski and de Pachmann—selling for a few cents. Suddenly we came across a Chopin waltz played by François Planté. We had known that the disk existed, but had never held it in our hands. Planté was considered the most important French pianist of his day, and toward the end of his career he made a few disks, in 1910 or thereabouts. Nonchalantly—how cunning! how shrewd!—we asked the price of the battered, worthless old record.

The dealer looked. A big smile came over his face. He waved an admonitory forefinger. It was a slow, authoritative wave. Damn him, he knew.

"*Très cher*," he said. "*Très cher*." It certainly was *très cher*. He asked about \$10 for the record.

On the other hand, there was a record shop in Lisboa that had, upstairs, about a thousand classical shellac disks. Among them were an aria by Maria Michailova, a Mardones disk in perfect condition, some very early Kreislers, the complete Mendelssohn G minor Piano Concerto on three acoustic disks played by Moiseiwitsch (we didn't even know that this existed) and part of the Chopin B minor Sonata played by Percy Grainger. All for about ten cents apiece.

### Transportation Problem

What a problem the purchase of old, very breakable disks poses! What to do with them? They weigh a lot, and one can't just go lugging them through Europe. Obviously they must be shipped home. But cartons are not very easy to come by in Portugal, and cardboard inserts are next to impossible to locate.

After visiting four or five record stores, waving paper money to no avail, we did come up with a carton, then the concierge of the hotel sent a bellhop to our room with three large cardboard cartons and a

dull knife. Somehow we managed to cut cardboard liners to size, stuffing them into the carton and wadding newspaper around the empty spaces that were left.

Don't think that this didn't take all of an afternoon, we hacking away industriously and cursing ourself for all kinds of an idiot. The concierge said that he would take care of the mailing. Since that moment we haven't slept well, and won't until we return home. Will those disks arrive unbroken? Will they arrive at all?\*

### Full Speed Ahead

The nicest thing happened in Cádiz. We were in a taxi talking with the driver—college Spanish, and he didn't even crack a smile—and he asked what we wanted to see. That was all that we and our *idée fixe* needed to hear. Old records, we said. Were there any for sale in town? Any shops, flea markets? The old boy wheeled his Essex around (yes; he was driving an Essex, itself a considerable collector's item, probably thirty-five years old) and dashed at full speed, twenty-five rattling miles an hour, to the local radio station. It seems they were getting rid of a lot of old records.

After much talk and waving of arms we were ushered into a room that had thousands of shellac disks. Most of them were pops, but there was a shelf of classicals. Alas! They were old but just not old enough. All of them were early electrics—Lener Quartet disks, Toscanini and the New York Philharmonic, Stokowski, a few familiar vocals. Certainly not the Vianna da Motta disks for which we turned Spain and Portugal upside down, or the Diémers and Janothas, or the Jean de Reszke.

Our driver, hovering over us, sweated it out as disk after disk was examined. He gave clucks of encouragement. Then, as the stack dwindled with no results, his face was a study in sorrow. So we took him out for a drink to prop him up. Then we started to think about what might have been in that collection in Cádiz, and we needed the drinks more than he did. But that's the way it goes.

\*All of them arrived. Not all were unbroken.  
—H.C.S.

# FROM THE EDITOR:

ATTENTION librarians and collectors who must have all: the biggest, most impressive, most luxurious thing in sight is the four-volume, forty-record *Storia della Musica Italiana*, which will encompass the whole sweep of music history in Italy. Only the first two volumes are to be had at the moment, and at that only with some nuisance. But arrangements are being made by Dario Soria of RCA Victor International to import the sets and make them available through normal outlets. Also, the Soria imports will contain English versions of the massive accompanying texts. More about this very soon. . . That most genial and perceptive of musicologists, Edward Downes, writing in the Schirmer centennial volume entitled "One Hundred Years of Music in America", finds it "likely that record criticism may develop enormously in the immediate coming years with unforeseeable results." Being rather close to the subject I am unable to foresee any development beyond a somewhat closer approach to the unattainable ideal of 100% coverage by specialists (all equipped with \$3,000 worth of hi-fi equipment), but if more and more worth-while records may be expected among the unforeseeable results I suppose the ARG's 28 years will not have been in vain. . . Among the "complete" projects in prospect are the Dvořák and Haydn Quartets—all of them, that's right—from Vox, and the same label will be right on the heels of Golden Crest (see page 201) with the entire keyboard works of Fauré. . . Pianophiles, brace yourselves; as predicted in this column last winter the five Carnegie Hall recitals by Sviatoslav Richter are now being released by Columbia—but only one at a time, to minimize bankruptcies among collectors. . . Old aficionados will be pleased (unless they are sensitive about their vintage) to welcome the same label's forthcoming "Music of Mexico", conducted by Carlos Chávez. It will be a duplicate of the program originally contained in a treasurable 78 r.p.m. album numbered M-414, with the difference that, thanks to the advan-

ages of microgroove, none of the pieces will be abridged this time. . . The statistically-minded will perhaps find a message in the fact that Van Cliburn outdrew Rodgers & Hammerstein at the Lewisohn Stadium this past season by a comfortable margin, 20,000 to 14,000. What it means to me is yet another proof positive that good music and glamor make an unbeatable combination at the box office. . . And still, thank God, there is room in the marketplace for the likes of Artur Schnabel. It is exciting news that another of his miraculous Schubert performances (the Op. 53 Sonata) is due shortly in Angel's "Great Recordings of the Century" series. That leaves only the A major Sonata yet to come. . . Speaking of reissues, E. M. I. has just launched in England its "Encore!" line, bringing back at a tempting price some of the finest pre-stereo recordings—Beecham's Schubert Sixth, for example. One hopes that the experiment will be repeated over here. . . Which reminds me to commend budget-conscious collectors to the current issue of *Consumer Reports* for a pretty good survey of the low-priced discs now flooding supermarkets and presumably also a lot of record stores. I continue to disapprove strongly of the *CR* anonymity policy (even in that bastion of objectivity reviews are *opinions* and a reader is entitled to know whose opinion he is being asked to respect), but whoever did this job did it creditably except for an entirely unfair generalization about the quality of the Richmond line. . . While we are on the subject of disc quality, you may recall that a couple of our reviewers and columnists unloaded buckshot into Decca some while back for its pressings. I am now happy to report that Decca has hoisted its standards as high as those of any other American label. I am bringing this up because another magazine of wide circulation recently printed a letter from a subscriber who complained bitterly about certain Decca releases of yore. The ARG having yelled plenty about this a couple of years ago, it is only fair that we should acknowledge the vast improvement. —J.L.

# Music of India

**The Drums of India;** Chatur Lal (tablâ)  
accompanied by Ramnarayan (sarangi).  
World-Pacific WP-1403, \$4.98.

*A Guest Review*  
**By MALCOLM PITT**

**T**HIS is a welcome addition to the growing list of well-recorded long-playing discs of Indian Music. It falls somewhere between a virtuoso performance and an illustrated first lesson in the materials of Indian rhythm.

The use of the tablâ, as of other drums in the music of India, is not that of solo instrument, although one delightful feature of many concerts, particularly of South Indian (Carnatic) music, may well be a conversation, or percussion "battle", between a mrdangam and a gata. This record, then, is the isolation of an essentially accompanying factor for special scrutiny, admiration, and study.

I do not mean to suggest that the virtuosity of a Chatur Lal is lost in a typical Indian concert. Rather, his virtuosity is manifest in the enhancement and embroidery of the solo voice or melodic instrument, and often this is in itself enchanting. So that "The Drums of India" is of special value first of all in demonstrating the subtlety, the refinement, the infinite variety of tone a master of the instrument can produce, and also to accustom the ear to detect these refinements without melodic distraction.

There are two aids to the novice that have been incorporated into this recording. The first is an all-too-brief definition of the tâla (rhythmic cycle) in numerical terms, the number of beats (surely not "bits" as the jacket has it) in the whole cycle, and their division into mâttras. Then the tâla is defined in terms of syllables representing the strokes the agile fingers of Chatur Lal

will use in the passages immediately following. He occasionally gives a rather breathless realignment showing inventive possibilities within the strict classical limits of the tâla. Fuller description would be welcome to Western listeners, with perhaps an indication in Roman script of the way in which modern India has chosen to indicate the basic principles of each tâla.

A second aid is an accompanying performance on the sarangi by Mr. Ramnarayan. This is not meant to be other than infinite repetition of a simple melodic phrase using one cycle of the tâla concerned. It is readily memorized, and by this means it is impossible to get lost in the pattern of the tâla, no matter what complications Chatur Lal may introduce. Ultimately the type of suspension characteristic of Indian music is felt instinctively, and against the at-home-ness in the basic pattern the crossing and recrossing of the rhythm and counter-rhythm of the two drums can be experienced; the *sam* is the home-coming, so to speak, and the *khali* measure is as the holding of the breath.

In the three tâlas played here, Chatur Lal has held himself strictly within the classical limits of the tablâ—his performance could very properly be the rhythmic backbone of an exciting ensemble.

One side of this record is given to *tritâla*, a cycle of sixteen beats divided into four mâttras of four beats each, with the third mâttra *khali*, or empty. The other side is shared by two tâlas: *Rûpaka*, a seven-beat cycle of three mâttras (3-2-2), and *Jayatala*, thirteen beats.

The tablâ is a drum-pair, one being of hollowed wood, cylindrical, the head tunable by leather thongs made taut with wooden spools. This is played with the right hand, and is usually tuned to the tonic of the *râga* to be used. The second,

larger at the head, is made of copper or other metal. The leather heads have each a black spot of *masala* (paste) near the center. Struck together at the *sam* they pursue somewhat independent courses through the cycle of rhythm, demanding the most extraordinary co-ordination.

This is certainly not the place for a technical discussion of the characteristics and materials of Indian rhythm, but it can serve for the airing of a long-held conviction that there should be produced, on disc, a *corpus* of expository material on the music of India which could be made available to serious students, and to those for whom some further knowledge of what is going on musically would enhance, indeed create, listening pleasure. Listeners in the West then could be made aware of the semantic of musical experience in the life-patterns of India and of the Indian musician.

Naturally, this would call for a much fuller exposition of the modal nature of Indian rhythm than that given on this recording, with full development of the *tālas* most frequently used—perhaps thirty. Helpful also to Western-trained musicians and music lovers would be a text especially designed to be illustrated by such recordings, and in which major variants from Western practice and theory could be noted. Melodic materials, the *rāgas*, could



be treated in this same fashion, building from the essential emphatic intervals through those that link them, up to a full dress performance.

Toward such an ideal the recording under scrutiny may be a modest groping.

*Our guest reviewer is a distinguished member of the faculty at The Hartford Seminary and an accomplished musician in both Western and Eastern styles. As an "old India hand", having lived there for many years, he maintains a special interest in the fascinating tonal art of that country, and not surprisingly is a member of the board of directors of the Society for Asian Music.*

**Classical Indian Music, Introduced by Yehudi Menuhin;** K. S. Narayananswami and Naraya Menon (veenas) and Palghat Raghu (mridangam). London CM-9282, \$4.98, or Stereo CS-6213, \$5.98.

*A Guest Review*  
**By SUSHIL MUKHERJEE**

**L**ATELY there has been an increased interest throughout the Western world in the arts of India. As a result there have been many new recordings of Indian music, both vocal and instrumental, ranging from folk to traditional forms. Some of these are excellent; most of them are indifferent to downright poor. This latest release, in spite of isolated moments

of excitement, has an over-all effect of dullness and mediocrity.

Yehudi Menuhin is known for his sensitive understanding of (and magnificent effort to popularize) classical Indian music. But on side one of this record he inexplicably makes his introductory speech drawn-out and at times superfluous.\* The speech cut down to half its length, giving only relevant and simple technical details, would have been quite adequate. Also, his contention that a *rāga* is a mode is

\*Mr. Menuhin some years ago contributed superbly succinct introductions to a pair of performances featuring the great sarodist Ali Akbar Khan on Angel 35283, which remains in my opinion the finest sampling of Indian music ever made available here.  
—Ed.

wrong. It is a much more specialized tonal frame than a mode is; it prescribes more or less rigidly not only a scale and a center-tone (*amsa*), but also the avoidance of certain tones. It further prescribes the use of typical progressions, melodic formulae, rhythmic patterns, and even ornamentations.

As for the music itself, one wonders first why there was any need to have a second veena. Unless both play with perfect understanding, virtuosity, and imagination, such a duet inevitably peters out into a dragging and monotonous affair—certainly it does here—instead of developing into a thing of excitement and enchantment.

One would need to have the ears of a fawn to be able to find out where the second veena (evidently played by Shri Narayana Menon, a scholar of music, but never heard of in India as a performing musician) actually makes its entrance. Here and there, more as a distraction to the music than anything else, one suddenly hears the strumming of this second soloist, harping on the tonic or doing a little amateurish turn of attempting the melody. It is also noticeable that Narayanaswami, a competent musician, does not come out with all that he is capable of because he has to cover up the weak part of the

ensemble—the second veena. However, Narayanaswami shows glimpses of his artistry when he executes some beautiful “gamakas”. (A “gamaka” is a rapidly increasing tremolo, an abruptly ending portamento performed either by a slide of the left hand or by a lateral pull of the strings.)

Side two has three pieces, all too short, as a result of which the “caranam” or development sections are unfortunately choppy and dwarfed.

Palghat Raghu's accompanying mridangam for some reason sounds flat and wooden. On side one, he plays his solo part with exuberance and does some fine improvisations within the rigid structure of a difficult seven-beat time measure—*Misra Chappu*. But the rest of the drumming is just up-and-down stuff.

---

*Sushil Mukherjee is equally distinguished as a painter and as a musician (the flute is his instrument, but he is proficient on others). Currently he is artist-in-residence at the Windsor Mountain School in Lenox, Massachusetts, and New York gallery-goers last month saw his second one-man show. His works are hung permanently in the state and national galleries of his native land, where he is remembered as a soloist over the All-India Radio network.*

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#### **Sir Rabindranath Tagore: “Shyama”**

*Parts 1-12*; Kanika Banerji (Shyama, the Court Dancer); Hemanta Mukherji (Vajrasen, the Merchant); Santosh Sen Gupta (His Friend); Tarun Banerji (Kotal, Keeper of Law and Order); Chinmoy Chatterji (Uttiya, who loves Shyama); Purabi Mukherji, Sumitra Sen, Alpana Roy, and Banani Ghosh (Shyama's Friends and Others); directed by Santosh Sen Gupta. Indian H.M.V. EALP-1257 or English H.M.V. ALP-1855 (import).

**By WILLIAM L. PURCELL**

**I**N THE YEAR of Tagore's 70th birthday, 1931, there was published in Calcutta a beautiful quarto *Festschrift*, entitled *The Golden Book of Tagore*, con-

taining ecstatic tributes from the elite of the world; such names as Einstein, Russell, Rolland, Yeats, Nehru, Dreiser, Durant, Croce, Mann, J. Huxley, Keyserling and hundreds of others were represented. “The Goethe of India”, in Dr. Schweitzer's apt phrase, was recognized as one of those universal creators, few in history, of multi-faceted genius. Tagore won the Nobel prize in literature in 1913 for *Gitanjali*—known in the West as poetry, in the East as music for, as the title *Song Offering* implies, all the poems are united to music—and was a poet, novelist, short-story writer, diarist, and traveler. In addition he ranked as a philosopher, or sage, and a humanitarian; he was an artist with around 2,000 pictures and drawings to his credit; and a singer and a composer of songs and music-

TAGORE  
CENTENARY  
1961

SHYAMA

An opera in

*Two Acts*

With

a spoken introduction

by

YEHUDI MENUHIN



dramas. No Western master of music has ever been so spiritually and intellectually gifted. But the question remains—was Tagore a major composer?

From the evidence of "Shyama", released in India and England in honor of the Tagore centenary—the second of his "operas" to reach us on records—it would appear that he was indeed.

Although to the people of India Tagore is regarded principally as a composer—a musician whose style is compounded of Western and Eastern elements with a fusion of Indian folk and classical music—in other countries this facet of his genius is little understood. Tagore himself was under no illusions about his musical appeal to foreigners and declared "it is nonsense to say that music is a universal language. I should like my music to find acceptance, but I know this cannot be, at least not till the West has had time to study and learn to appreciate our music." It is unfortunate, then, that the Indian edition of this recording provides the text of the drama in Bengali alone, although there is an accompanying précis of each of the twelve Parts. There is no available English translation; one that was made years ago by B. Chakravarty in a discontinued Calcutta publication, *Eastern Post*, is not to be had in this country. Moreover, scores of the Tagore music-dramas, if indeed they exist in Western notation are not to be found in any music store or library of my acquaintance. The sleeve of the Indian release provides a summary of the plot of "Shyama" but no

historical or analytical notes; the English edition has annotations and, as a bonus, a spoken introduction by Yehudi Menuhin, but no text or translation.\*

Vocal and instrumental performance are entirely satisfactory; surely this company knows the style and idiom. The recording, made at high level as recordings should be, is clear and well-balanced. This is a most valuable addition to the discography of Indian classical music and a rare musical experience. It should be released in the United States with a complete English translation and a transliteration of the Bengali.

\*The story line, based on a Buddhist legend, tells of the undying love of Shyama for an itinerant merchant who has been arrested for an alleged theft of royal jewelry. He is about to be executed when one of Shyama's admirers falsely confesses to the crime, and is hanged. Plagued by guilt because she knows that the confession was motivated by love for her, Shyama discusses the matter with her beloved and he is shocked that one so beautiful should have been the instrument of such callousness. Filled with revulsion, he leaves her. At the end he pleads to God: "I know You will forgive her, who, crushed under the weight of her sin, is lying prostrate at Your feet. But You will not forgive me for failing to forgive her." —Ed.

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# OTELLO

THIS incredibly rich and propulsive lyric tragedy, which seems at every hearing the very pinnacle of 19th-century Italian operatic achievement, has finally been recorded in stereo. Twice, in fact.

While it is possible to be grateful for the opportunity of hearing this masterpiece in one's home with a close approximation to its full sonic amplitude, and while the London set, at least, offers a performance of unusual finish and certainly better-than-average dramatic vigor, one's reaction after investigating both sets is to turn to the incomparable Toscanini-directed "*Otello*" on RCA Victor with even greater enthusiasm and respect.

It will perhaps seem unfair to London and RCA, each of which has clearly spent much time and resource to produce these new recordings, to have them evaluated not on their own terms but rather in relation to what Toscanini accomplished. But it cannot be helped. Toscanini's "*Otello*" lives in the memory as few performances ever do, continually intruding itself into one's thoughts even as a new recording is being heard.

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**VERDI:** "*Otello*"; Mario del Monaco (Otello), Renata Tebaldi (Desdemona), Aldo Protti (Iago), Ana Raquel Satre (Emilia), Nello Romanato (Cassio), Fernando Corena (Lodovico), Tom Krause (Montano), Athos Cesarini (Roderigo), Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Herbert von Karajan. London Stereo set OSA-1324, six sides, \$17.98. **The Same;** John Vickers, Leonie Rysanek, Tito Gobbi, Myriam Pirazzini, Florindo Andreolli, Ferruccio Mazzoli, Franco Calabrese, Mario Carlin, Rome Opera Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Tullio Serafin. RCA Victor-Soria Series Stereo set LDS-6155, six sides, \$20.98.

It is to the credit of the London production that it banishes, at least from time to time, the ghost of Toscanini's effort. Actually, this is an effective performance that has been meticulously prepared by Karajan and frequently executed with uncommon skill by his associates. It begins impressively, rising to a particularly dazzling rendition of the *Fuoco di gioia* chorus. Toward the end of the first act, it becomes clear that Del Monaco has seldom, if ever before, sung with such regard for Verdi's dynamics. As a result, he imparts a welcome degree of tenderness to his duet with Desdemona not to be found in his earlier recording. Even here, however, there are some awkward vocal moments, some coarse phrases, some wayward rhythm that rob Del Monaco's contribution of real distinction. And so it goes throughout the set. It is the best Otello, one feels, Del Monaco is apt to give us. It is crowded with the virtues of vocal health, tonal gleam, dramatic participation; but the grand humanity of the role is not always apparent, mostly, one believes, because of Del Monaco's musical shortcomings.

Desdemona would seem to be Tebaldi's most congenial role; it suits her temperament, vocal quality and technique as no other she has presented on records. Tebaldi is affecting in her every episode and easily the brightest vocal and dramatic ornament among the singers in both casts.

Protti has considerably strengthened his projection of Iago's music since his first recording, and his characterization now has a definite profile. But his voice remains just a shade too light and dry to cope with the passages that demand nothing less than strong, ringing tone. The remainder of the cast is of unusual merit, and it is seldom that we hear the *comprimario* roles handled with such care



By C. J. LUTEN

and understanding. The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra plays with tonal luster and power, as well as with its usual finesse. Karajan once again demonstrates his considerable abilities as a conductor of Verdi's music, and indeed, he is largely responsible for the lift this presentation gives one.

London's engineering is excellent, as usual. The sound is full, the surfaces quiet. The stereo effects are natural. But, also as usual, the voices are occasionally too distant. This "*Otello*" is in that respect, however, better than the recent "*Aida*".

Turning to the Victor set, it is difficult to say very much about a set which promised so much and has delivered so little. There have been many unexpected factors which have contributed to the result. Serafin, with so many years of treasurable operatic conducting behind him, is a major disappointment, and he is never up to our best memories of him. The Rome Opera Orchestra, on this occasion, cannot give him playing which is

unfailingly precise and unanimous. Time and time again, attacks are a bit ragged, balances improperly adjusted, and we get tone which is insufficiently rich or intense. This will not do—particularly in "*Otello*". Vickers, one of the world's few promising heroic tenors has a number of successes to his credit, but this *Otello* cannot be counted among them. His voice, in the first place, does not have the clarion ring essential to the part. Secondly, and most important, Vickers seems to be detached from *Otello's* tragedy. Despite his musicality, the purity of his vowel sounds, and his careful attention to rhythmic pulse and required dynamics, he never for a moment makes you believe he is the unfortunate Moor of Venice. He has, of course, had little experience with this extremely arduous role; and one day he may make us forget this early attempt.

Rysanek's voice is not sufficiently steady nor so consistently pure in tone to give us a satisfying Desdemona, and nothing she is able to do can conceal this fact for long. Gobbi's Iago was one of the distinguished operatic portraits in the decade following World War II, but today it is a remnant of what it was. Those who never experienced it will be impressed with much that is in these records. In the high-lying passages where forceful tone is required, nevertheless, the perceptive listener will be forced to admit that what Gobbi now offers is simply not enough. Outstanding among a generally good group of supporting singers is Florindo Andreolli, an uncommonly good Cassio.

RCA Victor's stereo recording has bright, clear, and firm sonics, though its range is not so wide as London's. The balance between voices and orchestra is just about ideal.

"*Otello*", Act II; a contemporary print based on the original production of 1887 (Museo Teatrale alla Scala)





# THE TRAGEDIE OF ROMEO and IVLIET

*Chorus:* Two households, both alike in dignity,  
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,  
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,  
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean,  
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes,  
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life,  
Whose misadventur'd, piteous overthrows,  
Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.

The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,  
And the continuance of their parents' rage,  
Which, but their children's end, nought could  
remove,  
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage,  
The which if you with patient ears attend,  
What here shall miss our toil shall strive to mend.

**T**HIS familiar sonnet-prologue introduces each of the six recordings here-with listed, though it is probably not even by Shakespeare, and indeed is scarcely worthy of him. (It was purposely omitted from the first and subsequent folio printings, and is found only in the quartos.) But since it has become a vehicle for actors of the caliber of Sir John Gielgud, and has been given such prominence in all the recorded versions of the play, it serves admirably to introduce my comparison of them. For it is strangely illuminating to note how the same words can be so presented as to cast us at once into six

altogether different atmospheres. I am considering the three deleted versions purely for the purpose of well-rounded comparison, and I hope the reader will bear in mind whether I am speaking of a new or a deleted recording.

At one extreme is the "once-upon-a-time" delivery of Dublin's Christopher McMaster, sad and remote against the strumming of Christopher Casson's harp, and divided from the opening main action by the straight comic badinage of Sampson and Gregory (a little too farcically chirpy on Gregory's part). At the other extremity we have the ominous, "here-and-

**SHAKESPEARE:** *Romeo and Juliet* (Complete—181 mins.); Eamonn Andrews Studio Presentation, Dublin, directed by Anew McMaster and produced by Fred O'Donovan, from the Oxford Edition. Spoken Word set A-16, eight sides, \$23.80 (mono only).

**SHAKESPEARE:** *Romeo and Juliet* (Complete—166'); Marlowe Society of Cambridge and professional players directed by George Rylands. Text from the Cambridge New Shakespeare edited by John Dover Wilson. London set

A-4419, \$19.92, or Stereo OSA-1407, \$23.92, eight sides each.

**SHAKESPEARE:** *Romeo and Juliet* (Complete—165'); Shakespeare Recording Society, with Claire Bloom, Albert Finney, Dame Edith Evans, Kenneth Haigh, and professional players directed by Howard Sackler. Text edited by G. B. Harrison. Caedmon set SR-228, six sides, \$17.85 (mono or stereo).

*Out of print:*

Old Vic Co. (slightly abridged, 152')....RCA  
M. Webster Co. (abridged, 110').....Atlantic  
J. A. Rank Film (highlights, 46').....Epic

By JACK DIETHER

now" annunciation of the Old Vic's Devlin, accompanied by timpanum rolls and preceded by a malevolent bit of organum for woodwinds. And this threat is carried through immediately: the play actually begins with a harrowing scream, followed by a foretaste of the actual skirmishing; and that same "comic" Sampson-Gregory byplay follows with no let-down in tension. *Their* talk of rape is no mere bawdy bragging, but in angry and deadly earnest, occupying a mere lull in the pervading storm. An extreme device indeed, but, for phonographic purposes, convincing.

There are other ways, too. The Rank-Castellani film is cyclically bounded by Roman Vlad's tragic and sharp-inflected chorus, *Jacent in pulvere miseri*, which, with his motivic follow-up in the orchestra, prepares in depth for Gielgud's fine unaccompanied prologue. (To accompany Gielgud's intensely musical tones would be quite redundant.) In this single-LP soundtrack condensation, the subsequent Sampson-Gregory scene is among the missing; but those included luckily undergo, with Vlad's help, a fairly coherent transfer to the record medium. An elaborately old-fashioned phonographic approach is Margaret Webster's, with the lady herself reading the prologue to a special adaptation of passages from Tchaikovsky's *Overture-Fantasy*. This is quite out of time-scale with the ensuing skimpy action of this two-record abridgement, although this whole early effort is of obvious and endearing historical interest.

Thus we come to the two new versions

which are in mono and stereo. The classical format of Cambridge insures once more the most objective approach, with the usual bare fanfare, and the prologue served "dry", as pure, objective information. I would love to hear this build up in Scene 1, like a Beethoven exposition (cf. the *Appassionata*), into a veritable tempest of fury. Unfortunately Cambridge manifests no such intent. The Sampson-Gregory exchange sets a promising scene, but it remains all on one dramatic level. The sound of clashing swords is the most mechanical you will hear anywhere in these albums, and the entry of the Prince (Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace. . .') is so unimpressive you wonder why the combatants paid any attention to him. This would not do in the theater itself, and for the phonograph there is no indication of the special requirements or possibilities of the medium—far less of stereo.

By contrast, Sackler-Caedmon solves almost all of the problems in a positive and inventive manner. It begins on a lower level than the Old Vic, but the build up is tremendous. The prologue lies between the straight narrative method of Cambridge and Old Vic's ominous portent. A few notes on a low, unaccompanied bassoon suffice to impart an immediacy in sharp contrast to Dublin's harp. The prologue is almost as objective as Cambridge's, with only the bassoon solo supplying an undertone abruptly supplanted at the end by a brief snare-drum roll, and we are off. (The reader of the prologue is not identified in the cast, for some reason, and it is not the player of

Prince Escalus, as is often the case. Could it be Sackler himself?) Sackler eschews the Old Vic's startling innovation and retains the traditional comic, attention-getting function of the opening dialogue, but with no hint of the farcical. The tones are semi-conspiratorial, with just the urgency and latent menace in Sampson's delivery needed to keep it within the larger perspective. The street brawl itself is the most graphic in any of these versions, especially in stereo, with a high and purposeful degree of structural clarification. As the fight becomes general, a bell begins tolling, heavily but well off, and does not cease until the fifth line of the Prince's exhortation. (Old Vic also uses bells, less impressively.) The Prince himself is announced, and his interjection reinforced, by a pair of high, warning horn-blasts. In this connection, Cambridge's Dart might be reminded that if Shakespeare's own theater, which he tries so assiduously to evoke by "minimal" means, had for the particular performance a bugler at hand who shirked such an obvious function, the dramatist would quite justifiably have cuffed him one.

Returning to the Dublin version, listeners to this point may begin to notice an unaccustomed slackness of pace, almost equal to that frequently maintained by Cambridge. Such lapses of that kind as recur here must, I believe, be attributed to the direction of Annew McMaster, in place of Hilton Edwards', as previously heard. This problem of Dublin (no longer officially "Dublin Gate" here) will be discussed in greater detail in my review of its Roman plays, *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus*. Here it may suffice to say that the superior pacing and dramaturgy of Sackler, in this tragedy as in that of *Macbeth* (see the March issue), is more in line with that of the Dublin Gate comedies released earlier than is the current work of Mr. McMaster. An indifferent *uncut* performance of this early Shakespearean tragedy can be unusually trying, if not downright embarrassing, owing to the sheer abundance of its rhetorical passion: e.g., the prolonged hysterical outbursts of young Romeo before his confessor (Scene

III-3) which are such a central part of the dramatist's conception.

In terms of production and direction alone, then, the Caedmon recording has the same advantages over its rivals that we noted in *Macbeth*, with the further consideration that this time we have an uncut text in the Caedmon version also—and it alone is, I think, able to sustain it. You will also notice that this three-record set was timed at just one minute less than Cambridge's four-record set, and just 16 minutes less than Dublin's four. It is also, therefore, the best monetary value—especially in stereo, for which Caedmon charges no more than for mono (in the current British practice), though its stereophonic engineering is much more advantageous to the play than London's is. Actually the London and Caedmon stereo are equal in price, the London mono lower, but again that advantage is swallowed up here by the extra record.

As before, Sackler's is a truly phonographically conceived production, with the advantages of the medium made to outweigh its limitations by real technical and directorial rapport, instead of the merely negative accommodation we seem to get from Cambridge. There is an extreme economy of musical means, but used dramatically rather than formalistically, coupled with real imagination instead of hobbled by formulae; only the deleted Old Vic set possibly excels it in this direction. The stereophonic perspective is particularly breath-taking. As one fine example of the use of both music and stereo, I would cite the brief pre-marriage scene at Friar Laurence's cell (II-6). Against the dialogue grouped toward left-center, the singing of a motet is heard far off right, with a dying cadence after the close of the scene, to be finally covered by the entry of the solo *cor anglais* toward the left, introducing Act III and the scene of the crucial catastrophe, the slaying of Mercutio and Tybalt. Such elementary and desirable sound orientation for a *Romeo and Juliet* conceived for the ear would not bear dwelling upon, were the competing versions not completely innocent of it. Or of such an utterly simple and evocative sound-effect

as the soft chirping of a cricket far left, to set and maintain the scene for a balmy evening on the street after the masked ball at the Capulets' (II-1). Limiting oneself to the inadequate written stage-directions in Shakespeare (most of which were added later anyhow) has no more validity than phrasing the lines solely and literally by the equally inadequate and chaotic quarto-folio punctuation would be. The same of course applies to the music, as in the scene of the ball itself (I-5), where only one music cue is given in the text, though there are quite obviously intended to be more.

Old Vic introduces the above-mentioned II-1 in an equally imaginative way, by the approaching singing of a male duet in French with guitar, followed by Benvolio calling Romeo's name; and the musical device is repeated with a livelier tune for the opening of II-4. I might also note, for the debit column, that Dublin does introduce one obvious, jarringly modern phonographic touch at the former point, where Mercutio calls into the night "Romeo, humors, madman, passion, lover!", and each word is given a series of conventional electronic echoes, as though they had incongruously crept in from Baylor. Perhaps it is just as well that such experiments ended there on Dublin's part. Spoken Word's side-break between this and the balcony scene is especially unfortunate, since the early editors (Rowe, etc.) who divided the scenes committed the indiscretion of beginning the latter in the middle of a rhymed couplet. A recording is eminently suited to heal such a chronic rupture, but only if the producer is aware of it. In the balcony scene itself, the London stereo places Juliet on the right and Romeo right-center, presumably on the literal ground that their separation is more vertical than horizontal, and we do not as yet have vertical stereo. Caedmon unhesitatingly translates this into the dramatic logic of the medium at hand, and used the full separation available, consistent with fairly close-up sound. The important consideration in this scene, as Granville-Barker says, is the dramatic use to which Shakespeare put "its very setting, which keeps the lovers

apart, stimulates passionate expression and helps sustain it."

Since all scene divisions as well as act divisions in *Romeo and Juliet* are editorial interpolations, it would have been well for Dublin and Cambridge to have eliminated dividing bands at least in the former case, while Cambridge's formal fanfares before each act obviously have not in this play the "authentic" function claimed for them in general. The Sackler version has dividing bands only between the acts, when they occur mid-side, as they do in three out of four cases, and they are covered by music in each case. In the first act-break, for example, the division is cleverly placed under a sustained note of the bassoon, so that it makes sense if played either way.

And so to the host of vivid characters created here by the Bard. A principal key to the desired interpretation of Romeo may be found in Friar Laurence's lines—

These violent delights have violent ends,  
And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,  
Which, as they kiss, consume. (II-6)

—an idea that returns in many forms. It is Romeo's fatal flaw that, although he means love, he is by nature as rash and hasty as the hot-blooded feuders themselves. "Away to heaven, respective lenity," he cries over the slain Mercutio, "and fire-eyed fury be my conduct now!" "Wisely and slow," Laurence has admonished him; "they stumble that run fast." That verb returns in the last scene of this whirling accelerando: the Friar himself stumbles literally, when the galloping frenzy of Romeo to come back and lie in death with his supposedly dead Juliet compels the old man to run to the churchyard at night, in order to avert the mischance he fears. "How oft to-night have my old feet stumbled at graves!" he exclaims when he arrives on the scene, seconds after Romeo has fulfilled his "dateless bargain to engrossing death". Thus *Romeo and Juliet* is not purely a "tragedy of circumstance", as the several "accidental" contretemps of its final act have led many critics to regard it, but a true tragedy of character, consummated not so much by chance as by a

(Continued on page 243)

# Other Reviews

(including stereo®)

**T**HERE IS IN SOULS a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.

—William Cowper

**J. C. BACH:** *Harpsichord Concerti in D and G*; **C. P. E. BACH:** *Harpsichord Concerto in D minor*; Fritz Neumeyer (harpsichord); The Wiener Solisten conducted by Wilfried Bötscher. Vanguard/Bach Guild BG-616, \$4.98, or Stereo BGS-5040, \$5.95.

®THE music of J. S. Bach's eminent sons has been making but slow progress on records, and a wavering one, at that, thanks to frequent deletions. It is therefore a pleasure to welcome this fine record, devoted to the two best-known of them. The two compositions by "the London Bach" are polished, skillful, and thoroughly ingratiating. The D major is No. 3 of the Op. 7 of c. 1770, while the G major is No. 5 of another half-dozen published in 1777. Apparently neither has been recorded before. That is not true, however, of C. P. E.'s work, which appeared on an old Concert Hall release (CHS-1074), and on a newer Oiseau-Lyre one (OL-50138). But of these two records the former has long been out of print and the latter is not regularly available on the American market. This new recording, therefore, has a clear field here. Composed in 1748, this Concerto (No. 23 in the Wotquenne catalogue) is an intense and searching work. Taken together, the three compositions provide invaluable perspective for the development of the classical concerto, and especially for the roots of Mozart's essays

in the form. Fritz Neumeyer has long been known to us from his Archive recordings as a sensitive performer. He receives warm and precise support from this promising new ensemble, and the stereo sound is both well-balanced and well-distributed. A warmly recommended release.

—J.W.B.

**J. S. BACH:** *Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I (24 Preludes and Fugues)*; Samuel Feinberg (piano). Artia set MK-211C, \$11.96 (Artia import).

Tureck.....Decca DX-127/8

▲ALTHOUGH Feinberg rightly emphasizes the free, romantic line of the baroque style, he overdoes a good thing. His interpretations are closer to Schumann than to Bach. It is disappointing that he is not more successful in his fervent approach. A little emotionalism properly placed in the florid lines would be refreshing, for too often pedantic Bach playing is thought to be correct merely because it is starched and clean. Still, Feinberg goes too far. Doubtless he is an effective pianist when he performs other, more compatible music. His playing is the effortless kind, enhanced by a delicate sense of nuance and shifting tempos; he also exhibits a luscious tone, a first-rate technique, and a superb command of the pedal. But his interpretations are weighed down by constant ritardandos and



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exaggerated, though beautifully proportioned, rubatos. His playing is also less sharp and clear-cut than traditional Bach performances, highlighted by the kind of suspended accents one finds best suited to Chopin. In total, the Russian pianist's ideas differ so radically from the indications in editions commonly considered authoritative (in this country, at least) that I question the authenticity of the publication he uses, as well as his own Bach concepts.

Feinberg is at his best in Nos. 1 through 8. Here he is fairly discreet in taking liberties, although he does play the first Prelude and Fugue at half the standard speed. His ability to bring out themes and fragments of themes is quite keen, but occasionally his preoccupation with them gives the piece a disjointed quality. As he concentrates on accenting each entrance he loses the direction of the melodic line, but even then he is not consistent. In Fugue No. 9, for instance, he prefers at times to emphasize the upbeat eighth notes, forgetting about the all-important first-beat quarter note to which they lead. At other times he follows through correctly. As for manuscript alterations and embellishments, particularly in Preludes and Fugues Nos. 3, 10, 21, and 24, one notes the addition and subtraction of trills and mordents, the rolling of chords, and change in phrasing that appears in the Bach autograph. With such an unorthodox approach, I cannot consider this recording a document, although undeniably it contains some lovely moments.

Hans von Bülow is reputed to have said that "The *Well-Tempered Clavier* is the Old Testament of the piano compared to the piano sonatas of Beethoven, the New Testament." Nevertheless, the Preludes and Fugues have been dreadfully neglected on records. Few pianists have had both the courage to tackle the assignment and the ability to complete it successfully. Outside of the Landowska version (on harpsichord) only Tureck's is at all acceptable. It is certainly to be hoped that in the near future the void will be filled by a recording that not only offers fresh ideas, but also upholds the Bach tradition.

—D.A.K.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Piano Concerto No. 1 in C, Op. 15; Sonata No. 31 in A flat, Op. 110.* Andor Foldes (piano). Bamberger Symphony Orchestra conducted by Ferdinand Leitner. Deutsche Grammophon 18636, \$5.98, or Stereo 138 636, \$6.98.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Piano Sonatas in A, Op. 101; in F sharp, Op. 78; in E, Op. 109; in G minor, Op. 49, No. 1.* Andor Foldes (piano). Deutsche Grammophon 18643, \$5.98, or Stereo 138 643, \$6.98.

⑧ THE piano music of Beethoven perhaps more than that of any other lends itself, within the framework of the composer's expressed intentions, to a variety of equally valid interpretations. Beginning with Hans von Bülow in the late 19th century, a number of great pianists built their reputations largely on their Beethoven interpretations, or turned more and more to Beethoven in their later years. Among them, to name some of the peers, were Eugén D'Albert, Frederick Lamond, Eduard Risler and, coming closer to our own times, Artur Schnabel, Wilhelm Kempff, Edwin Fischer, Wilhelm Backhaus and, to a lesser extent perhaps, Walter Gieseking. Others, like Paderewski, Hofmann and Rachmaninoff, were noted for their performances of particular works. The three mainstreams of Beethoven playing as we know it today, however, have their source in Schnabel, Backhaus, and Gieseking. These masters eschewed the liberties which the older school of Beethoven interpreters took as a matter of course, although each acquired some few idiosyncrasies of his own, wittingly or unwittingly, in the process.

All of which is a preamble to considering some remarkably perceptive and beautiful Beethoven playing on these records. Foldes plays in a style that is liquidly legato, technically flawless, penetrates the surface and faithfully follows all the composer's expression marks without being knuckle-bound by them. It is intimate playing but not bloodless. If it errs at all, it is in being just a shade too beautiful and too chiseled to perfection. DGG's engineers have come pretty close, too, to capturing the ideal piano sound—round, smooth, mellow, with just enough concert-



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hall reverberation to suggest a "live" take. This is particularly true of the disc devoted to sonatas, although the Concerto represents Foldes' Beethoven playing at its most intimate and captivating. Indeed, this is one of the best performances of the Concerto that I have ever heard. Piano and orchestra are beautifully integrated, and Leitner gives Foldes the support and leeway he needs without neglecting the high points in the orchestral portions of the score. Foldes extracts the utmost musical values, too, from the cadenza to the first movement (he plays No. 1) instead of dashing it off as a mere virtuoso display piece. On a par with his playing of the Concerto are his interpretations of Op. 101 and Op. 109. In the former, he handles the tricky cross-hand work in the trio of the march movement with the greatest of ease and a stunning expressive purpose to boot. If Foldes' performances of these and the other sonatas on these discs recall that of any of the aforementioned pianists, it is Gieseking. They have a similar super-sensitive awareness of tonal values in the various parts to the whole and he knows just when and where to highlight an inner voice or bring out a dynamic stress tellingly.

—R.K.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Sonata No. 9 in A for Violin and Piano, Op. 47* ("Kreutzer"); Jascha Heifetz (violin), Brooks Smith (piano); **J. S. BACH:** *Concerto in D minor for Two Violins and Orchestra, BWV 1043*; Jascha Heifetz and Erick Friedman (violins); New Symphony Orchestra of London conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent. RCA Victor LM-2577, \$4.98, or Stereo LSC-2577, \$5.98.

(Beethoven)  
Y. and H. Menuhin.....Capitol SG-7246  
(Bach)  
Y. Menuhin, Ferras.....Capitol SG-7210

⑧HERE is a "Kreutzer" like no other! No one but Heifetz would have the courage to take the fast movements at such a dizzyingly fast pace, since no one but Heifetz could conceivably be accurate under such conditions. *Everything* is tense and terribly angry. Heifetz gives the impression of hacking the work to death rather than playing it. Even the *Andante con variazioni* is somewhat in this

spirit, although it is taken at a tempo but slightly faster than that normally encountered. This movement certainly requires some expansiveness and relaxation; Mr. Heifetz thinks otherwise. Brooks Smith labors nobly throughout, but all any pianist can do with these mad tempi is poke and punch. In the Bach "Double", which features the recording debut of Erick Friedman, Mr. Heifetz' pupil, the opening *Vivace* is brutally driven—again, I assume, by the most renowned of the participants—and exceedingly harsh. The slow movement is cool and undistinguished, while in the grim finale some impossibly corny dynamics are employed. It would be unfair to assess Mr. Friedman's contribution on the basis of a performance which obviously expresses only the intentions of his teacher. Victor's sound is very close-up in the Beethoven; spacious in the Bach with particular emphasis on the booming cello and double basses.

—H.G.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Sonata No. 16 in G, Op. 31, No. 1*; **SCHUBERT:** *Sonata in A Op. 120*; Dimitri Bashkurov (piano). MK-1564, \$5.98 (Artia import).

(Beethoven)  
Backhaus.....London LL-951


▲ONE immediately feels the youthful exuberance that has been poured into this recording by Bashkurov, an excellent young Russian pianist of definite musical convictions. The Schubert Sonata receives a personal and tender performance. Although the opening theme is somewhat overpedaled, he does realize the romantic curve of the lovely melodic line. The most sensitive part is the gossamer last movement. Rarely is this section played so well. The feather-light scales, metrically even and judiciously phrased, contrast with the sudden chord bursts to give the movement the flavor of a folk dance. The Beethoven Sonata, on the other hand, receives a forceful interpretation that for me completely misses the point. Bashkurov seems to take the naïve view that because the Sonata was written by Beethoven it must be profound. He does his best to offer a weighty reading, but it does not suit this Haydnesque work, which

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represents Beethoven in a jovial humor. The vastly more experienced Backhaus understands this; his version is simple, straightforward, and perfectly in the mood. Polished phrasing and flirting color contrasts are Backhaus' interests in the first movement, while the younger artist moves dramatically from somber tones to brilliant ones. Bashkirov has no fun at all with the second movement. He even omits the staccato marks over the melody and scale passages in order to achieve a smooth, lyrical effect. Backhaus plays cat and mouse with the phrases and themes in an absolutely delightful episode. It is surprising that such a well-trained and musical artist as Bashkirov would make such an obvious interpretative blunder. The recorded sound of the piano is robust and at the same time exquisitely bell-like. —D.A.K.

•  
**BEETHOVEN:** *Piano Trio in B flat, Op. 97* ("Archduke"); **HAYDN:** *Piano Trio No. 4 in E; Trio di Trieste*. Deutsche Grammophon 19220, \$5.98, or Stereo 136 220, \$6.98

⑤THE major interest is the Beethoven. The performance here is only fair. The Trieste group play with chamber-music knowledge, but not much understanding of Beethoven. Only in the final set of variations do they stir the depths of this composition. The majestic quality of the first movement has little nobility, rather much romantic curling of line and phrase. In the *scherzo* the pert profile of the music is anything but clearly defined; the players are too serious for this semi-serious music. The Haydn is played acceptably. There is little difficulty for professionals in this work. —A. C.

•  
**BEETHOVEN:** *Symphony No. 7 in A, Op. 92*; Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Otto Klemperer. Angel Stereo S-35945, \$5.98.

⑤EARLIER I have had occasion in these pages to comment on Klemperer's apparent awareness of posterity in his recordings of the Beethoven symphonies. And how that awareness would seem to have caused him to sacrifice spontaneity of expression for clarity of design and

highly polished execution. Here, we have a recording that provides the most devastating example of Klemperer's quest for the note-perfect, balance-perfect performance. In order to reach this far-from-easy goal, he has employed tempi that are so far from Beethoven's *vivace* in the major portion of the first movement, from *presto* in the opening and close of the scherzo, and from *allegro con brio* in the finale as to appear grotesquely unreasonable. Even the great strength always prevalent in Klemperer's performances of Beethoven's music is ineffective in the face of such handicaps. —C.J.L.

■  
**BEETHOVEN:** *Symphony No. 9, "Choral"*; Hilde Gueden (soprano); Sieglinde Wagner (contralto); Anton Dermota (tenor); Ludwig Weber (basso); Singverein der Gesellschaft de Musikfreunde, Vienna; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Erich Kleiber. Richmond B-19083, \$1.98.

▲THIS recording was originally issued in 1952, at which time it occupied four LP sides. It is remarkable, then, that this bargain-priced reissue is neatly fitted onto two. What is even more striking is that after the passage of time it sounds as well as it does. From the first it was accepted as one of the best recorded Ninths, and in many respects it still holds its place. Kleiber's is a sane, healthy reading, without the drive of Toscanini's or the warmth of Furtwängler's. It strikes me now as smoothly satisfactory, not dependent on unexpected effects. The recorded sound, lacking the detail now possible in stereo, has good richness and body, and a good deal of the quality of the Viennese hall in which it originated. In the last movement the choral sound is particularly good, though the soloists are brought too close for illusion. The work of the quartet could be better. Weber, a real basso, manages well and the high-lying phrases do not throw him; Gueden by nature is not just the soprano the music calls for—her tones are a little thin and brilliant—but Dermota and Wagner perform with competence. This is not that ideal quartet which can make it all sound easy. The orchestra performs beautifully. —P.L.M.

## Three by Novaes: unreservedly recommended

**T**HE LATE James Gibbons Huneker once dubbed Guiomar Novaes "The Paderewski of the Pampas"—a soubriquet that revealed his pianistic, if not geographical, acumen. It was, in truth, an astute observation. The magnetic Pole and the petite Brazilian had much in common, not the least of which was their ability to play on the heartstrings of their listeners.

Miss Novaes remains today what she has been these many years—the undisputed queen of her realm. A pianist in the romantic tradition, she has not changed her style of playing appreciably nor attempted to be anything but her own inimitable self since I first heard her decades ago in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. If time

has tempered somewhat the once youthful ardor of her playing, it has also mellowed and deepened her art.

Chopin, Schumann, and Beethoven are the composers for whom she has always shown a special predilection. These latest Vox releases of her playing of works by these masters reveal her art at its best and ripest. At the same time they are a veritable treasure trove of beautiful and communicative piano playing. Although the tempos she adopts are, perhaps, a bit more deliberate than those we have become accustomed to, there is no lack of momentum. Quite the contrary. Such tempi are the fruits of wisdom; they allow the music to breathe and to speak its message more tellingly. If anyone doubts that these are due to technical weaknesses, he has only to listen to Miss Novaes' whirlwind performance of the closing *presto* in the "Waldstein". Few pianists can sing as eloquently on the keyboard as Miss Novaes does in the *Introduzione* to the Rondo of this Sonata, in the slow movements of the Chopin and Beethoven Concertos, and in the Schumann pieces. Throughout the remaining movements of the Concertos, Miss Novaes displays a sovereign mastery that far transcends the mere playing of the notes. And always there is the luster of her tone to distinguish the recordings. In addition, the pianist has the excellent support and sympathy of Jonel Perlea and the Bamberg Symphony.

In short, these three discs can be recommended unreservedly.

—R.K.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Piano Concerto No. 5 in E flat, Op. 73 ("Emperor")*; Guiomar Novaes (piano); Bamberg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jonel Perlea. Vox PL-11,930 or Stereo STPL-511,930, \$4.98.

**CHOPIN:** *Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11*; Guiomar Novaes (piano); Bamberg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jonel Perlea. Vox PL-10,710 or Stereo STPL-510,710, \$4.98.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Sonata in C, Op. 53 ("Waldstein")*; **SCHUMANN:** *Arabesque, Op. 18*; *Nocturne, Op. 23, No. 4*; *Romance in F sharp, Op. 28, No. 2*; *"The Prophet Bird", Op. 82, No. 7*; Guiomar Novaes (piano). Vox PL-11,990 or Stereo STPL-511,990, \$4.98.



**BELLINI:** "Norma"; Maria Callas (Norma); Franco Corelli (Pollione); Christa Ludwig (Adalgisa); Nicola Zaccaria (Oroveso); Edda Vincenzi (Clotilde); Piero de Palma (Flavio); La Scala Chorus and Orchestra, conducted by Tullio Serafin; Norberto Mola (chorus master). Angel set 3615 C/L, six sides, \$18.94.

⑧WHEN Rosa Ponselle essayed the role of Norma at the Metropolitan in 1927 she not only ascended one of the twin peaks of her career, but also she wrote a page of operatic history. The opera had not been heard in the house since Lilli Lehmann's single performance in 1890. Borne on the great flood of Wagnerism, Henry T. Finck had written in 1888 that the operas of Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini were dead and could never be brought back to life again. Even so, Lilli—perhaps the greatest of all Wagnerians—loved this opera. And had Finck lived a year or two longer (he died in 1926) he might have been astounded at Ponselle's success. The artist proved that, given voice, musical intelligence and nobility of style, Bellini's opera is still the masterpiece our grandfathers thought it. And it had come back to stay. After Ponselle the role was sung in the Metropolitan by Gina Cigna, by Zinka Milanov and by Maria Callas.

Much has been written about the Callas approach to the older operas, and she has gone far beyond the classic "Norma" in her search for vehicles of the period to carry her art. There is no question hers is a fresh approach in our time, but just how it would compare with that of the great Normas of a century ago—especially Pasta and Grisi—we have no way of knowing surely. These singers may have been a brainier lot than some of their successors, and they may have been as effective as Callas in their delivery of operatic texts, though nowadays one associates this kind of singing rather with lieder than opera. But there is no question that as technicians the older singers were superior.

Now that we have a second Callas "Norma" recording, it becomes clear that much of her singing does not come easy to her, and that if she had trouble with her high C's in the earlier version, she has

even more trouble now. That with such handicaps she could have enjoyed the success she has—that she could have put her performance over despite these shortcomings—is a proof of very unusual talent.

Returning now to the older set I am surprised that it impressed me as much as my review of it indicates. For though one can admire the pointing of words, especially in the *Casta diva*, it is really essential that this be joined with beautiful tone, and much of the Callas tone is not beautiful. Apparently she never could produce a steady, well-pointed high C. Her associates also worked with uneven results. Worst of the lot is Rossi-Lemeni, whose pitch is so indefinite that his singing gives me no pleasure at all. Stignani, then no longer in her first youth, sang with ample tone and a sense of style, but even she was careless with some of her *fiorature*. Fillipeschi was an acceptable Pollione, though the last criticism applies even more to him. I can admire Serafin's pacing and the work of chorus and orchestra.

In the new version I feel a certain cleavage between the nobly classic conception of the conductor and the singing of the prima donna, for Callas can no longer sustain the line as successfully as she once did. There are still fine things—such as her treatment of the phrase *Pei figli tuoi* in the last act—but there are disappointments such as the climactic *Son io*, which was unsteady in the first version and is more so now. Christa Ludwig's voice is fresh and handsome, but she too could spend some time perfecting her passage work. Corelli is fine when he can belt it out, which is a good deal of time, but he still has some vocal crudity to overcome. Zaccaria is an immense improvement over Rossi-Lemeni without matching one's memories of Pinza.

It is notable that, aside from the pre-war Cetra set with Cigna, there has been no recorded "Norma" without Callas. I would be at a loss to say who should give us one. But I want more moonlight than I find in this *Casta diva*. I want a clean ending of that great scene, too, and a facile cadenza.

—P.L.M.



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**BRAHMS:** *Piano Concerto No. 2 in B flat, Op. 83*; Géza Anda (piano); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Ferenc Fricsay. Deutsche Grammophon Stereo SLPM-138 683, \$6.98.

Gilels, Reiner, Chicago Sym. Victor LM/LSC-2219

⑤THIS recording offers no competition for the ebullient Gilels version (not to mention Horowitz, Katchen, Backhaus *et al.*). Its most attractive feature is lush recorded sound. In contrast to other current recordings, the interpretation is sluggish. The work is not only played slowly, but its lines are so drawn out that they lose their cohesiveness, and the glorious score becomes a downright bore. This is the unfortunate result of paying too much attention to detail, and not enough to the over-all concept. —D.A.K.

•  
**BRAHMS:** *String Quartet in B flat, Op. 67*;

**DVOŘÁK:** *String Quartet in F, Op. 96*; Amadeus Quartet. Deutsche Grammophon 18626, \$5.98, or Stereo 138 126, \$6.98.

⑤THE focus of rubato in performance poses no argument as to its requirement; but, mind you, properly so. This matter of time inflection is brought to the fore in the Amadeus performance of Brahms' last quartet. Now, Brahms mixed his elements from a crossbreeding of classical solidity of structure and a romantic freedom of mood and color, thus fused the two strains of technique. This composer who walked in simultaneous, duplex paths—and successfully—is a classic-romantic, a hybrid. But to assume that romanticism, with its freedom, deposes classical order, is an interpretative sin. And the Amadeus four do sin, mightily. There is no need to poke around in the Bavarian beery fun, the evanescent rhythm that is the life line of Brahms' opening movement, but they do. And the last movement, which gives every instrument a chance at shaping the theme and squeezing it into varied contours is made a performer's holiday by way of hesitant upbeats, spread phrases, and agogical monkeyshines. It is all very mannered and not to the Brahms manner whatsoever. This impartial detailing of Brahms' work does not apply to the inner movements, both of which are performed

satisfactorily. Nor does it pertain to the Dvořák work. In this instance style matches the score; the playing is warm, lucid, and corresponds to the fervent singing that possessed Dvořák throughout. The final movement, which could be easily classified as a hoe-down, a soft-shoe dance, a mild ragtime, or a *furiant* that Dvořák danced on Iowan soil, is beautifully executed. —A.C.

•  
**CHOPIN:** *Polonaise-Fantaisie No. 7 in A flat, Op. 61*; *Mazurka No. 22 in G sharp minor, Op. 33, No. 1*; *Scherzo No. 4 in E, Op. 54*; *Étude No. 4 in A minor, Op. 25*; Irina Zarickaja (piano). *Nocturne No. 12 in G, Op. 37, No. 2*; *Mazurka No. 36 in A minor, Op. 59, No. 1*; *Mazurka No. 49 in F minor, Op. 68, No. 4*; *Six Préludes—No. 2 in A minor, No. 8 in F sharp minor, No. 13 in F sharp, No. 3 in G, No. 20 in C minor, No. 14 in E flat minor*; Tania Achot-Haroutounian (piano). Deutsche Grammophon 19219, \$5.98, or Stereo 136 219, \$6.98.

**CHOPIN:** *Polonaise No. 5 in F sharp minor, Op. 44*; *Mazurka No. 32 in C sharp minor, Op. 50, No. 3*; *Impromptu No. 3 in G flat, Op. 51*; *Nocturne No. 13 in C minor, Op. 48*; Maurizio Pollini (piano). *Sonata No. 2 in B flat minor, Op. 35*; Michel Block (piano) DGG 19218, \$5.98, or Stereo 136 218, \$6.98.

⑤THESE two discs are the cream of the Sixth International Chopin Competition held in Warsaw during the summer of 1960, during which some 86 candidates between the ages of 16 and 30 from 30 countries participated. Maurizio Pollini, the 20-year old product of the Milan Conservatory who is now an established star in Europe and who will visit us for the first time this fall, won first prize. Irina Zarickaja, a 23-year-old Russian pupil of Jakob Flier, was runner-up. Tania Achot-Haroutounian, 25, born in Teheran and Paris Conservatory-trained, won third prize. Fourth prize winner as well as recipient of the personal prize of Artur Rubinstein was Michel Block, 26, who was born in Antwerp, received early training in Mexico and finished up at Juilliard.

After hearing these two finely recorded discs, one is forced to this conclusion: when



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it comes to Chopin, Rubinstein knows best. Block's traversal of the B flat minor Sonata shows more personality, yields more apposite expressive juice than any of the other performances. The first two movements, indeed, challenge the best of the modern recordings we have had of this music. (The *Marche funèbre* does not have the power it can have because Block does not pay close enough attention to Chopin's dynamic markings; e.g., the *sempre forte* in the left-hand trills evocative of drum rolls is played decidedly *sempre piano*.)

Block has neither the luscious tone of Zarickaja or Achot-Haroutounian nor the enameled tone and superlative finger technique of Pollini. But his tone and manual skills are certainly good enough for the B flat minor Sonata, and that is all anyone needs if one has Block's quite remarkable emotional projection.

Pollini's playing, as one who has heard

his recording of the Chopin E minor concerto will remember, is musical, polished, a model of clarity—and a bit frosty in expression. So it is here. When Pollini loosens up a little and widens his dynamic span a hair, he will be an irresistible pianist.

Zarickaja, as noted, owns a lovely tone, and she articulates with admirable clarity. Her playing, all the same, tends to monotony for want of sufficient verve and attention to the grand line. Her best performance is the E major Scherzo, in which she almost scores a triumph.

Achot-Haroutounian does not articulate so well as her competitors, and her rhythm is insufficiently steady in much of her slow playing, but she has a clean, bright tone with a good nap on it and a kind of passionate way of expressing herself that might one day make her someone to contend with.

—C.J.L.

## From Detroit, a precedent-shattering release

**CHABRIER:** *España; Suite Pastorale; Fête Polonaise; Overture to "Gwendoline"; Danse Slave*; Detroit Symphony Orchestra conducted by Paul Paray. Mercury Stereo SR-90212, \$5.98.

THIS release is an event of manifold significance; one hardly knows where to begin discussing it. Suppose we commence with congratulations to Paray and those who have backed the Detroit orchestra through so many disappointing and frustrating years. Their five-year-or-so plan, that began with a disreputable ensemble, survived a new auditorium with appalling acoustics as well as the usual torments known to every symphony business manager, has paid off. On the basis of this recording, one must acknowledge the Detroit Symphony as having arrived at the very threshold to the hall of the orchestral elite. (Here is yet another manifestation of the vigor of musical activity in the Middle West, confirming once again one's suspicion that this section of our country is perhaps the fastest rising star in the musical skies of the entire western world.)

Citations are due also for the musical

and recording staff of Mercury. Its discovery of the superb Cass Technical High School Auditorium and its decision to use this room in place of the Ford concert hall has been pivotal in allowing us to appreciate fully the merits of Paray and his musicians. Then, its skill in producing this disc must be applauded, for the results can only be called precedent-shattering. The dynamic expanse, the separation, the stereo spread, the fullness of the clean sonics all add up to a naturalness of sound unsurpassed in my experience.

What has been preserved in such exemplary fashion are enchanting performances so precise and animated, so impeccable in style that they quite outstrip any other recordings I can recall of these impressively inventive, witty, high-spirited, and gently touching scores.

One looks forward to the Mercury recordings from Detroit that are doubtless forthcoming. Since we can be reasonably sure we shall get the most popular French pieces anyway, perhaps now is the time to suggest that a Fauré disc and some little-played Berlioz would be especially welcome.

—C.J.L.



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⑧ **DISAPPOINTING.** Bernstein has not been able to draw from the Philharmonic the luminous sound or the lightness of texture indispensable to these scores. Furthermore, the ensemble is ragged in far too many places. It seems to me that Bernstein's approach to these pieces is frequently at odds with what is inherent in them. Time and again he contributes an alien emotional coloration to passages which thrive on disinterested passion. There are other unsettling periods in these performances; among the most notable are the breaths in the opening phrases of *Nuages* and the poor rhythmic scansion later on.

—C. J. L.

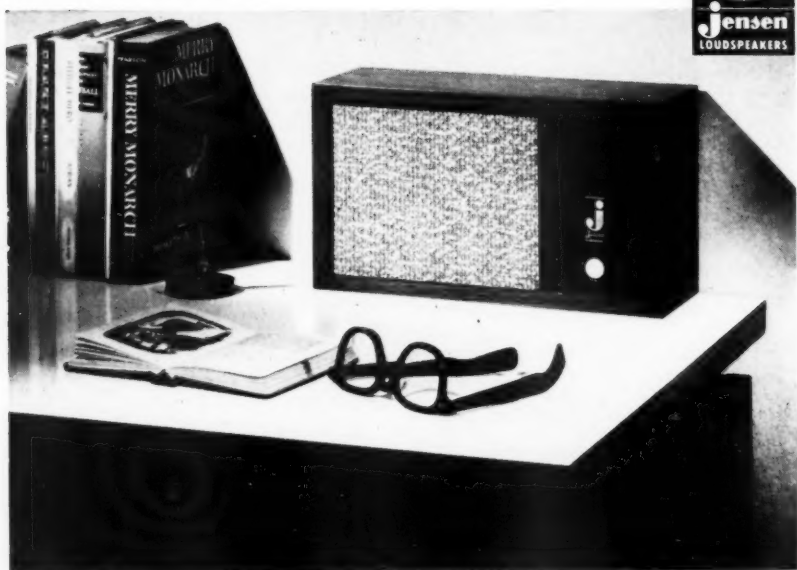
**DVOŘÁK:** *Violin Concerto in A minor, Op. 53*; **BEETHOVEN:** *Romances Nos. 1 and 2, Opp. 40, 50*; Joan Field (violin); Berlin Symphony Orchestra conducted by Artur Rother. Telefunken Stereo TCS-18046, \$2.98.

(Concerto)

Milstein, Steinberg. . . . .Capitol SP-8382

⑧ **THE** Dvořák is a delightful performance. The soloist has just the right approach to the music, keeping up a lively pace, not bothering to linger over the somewhat obvious and slender dramatic qualities with which the composer attempted to fill the score, and setting forth the folksy melodies with plenty of spirit. This is an energetic, youthful performance which strikes me as eminently satisfying. Milstein is unquestionably the more dazzling violinist, and he receives somewhat stronger support than the able

# So Compact...



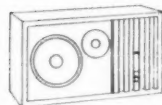
Rother is able to supply; but Field knows what she is about and succeeds in transmitting the guileless charm of the Concerto admirably. I will not attempt to evaluate her performance of the Romances. This is for me dreary music which sounds the same to me no matter who is performing it. Excellent stereo sound. —H.G.

•  
**ENESCO:** *Rumanian Rhapsody No. 1, in A, Op. 11*; **LISZT:** *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2, in C sharp minor*; **SME-TANA:** *The Moldau; Overture to "The Bartered Bride"*; RCA Victor Symphony conducted by Leopold Stokowski. RCA Victor LM-2417, \$4.98, or Stereo LSC-2417, \$5.98.

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Who could elicit a more juicy sound from this tone poem, and especially from the water-nymph episode? On the other hand, the opening of the "*Bartered Bride*" Overture lacks the biting humor so essential to these pages. The Rhapsodies, however, give Stokowski the chance once again to pull and haul in his inimitable fashion. The sound is especially bright.

—D.H.M.

•  
**ENESCO:** *Rumanian Rhapsody in A, Op. 11, No. 1*; *Rumanian Rhapsody in D, Op. 11, No. 2*; **LISZT:** *Hungarian Rhapsodies Nos. 2 and 3*; London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Antal Dorati. Mercury Stereo SR-90235, \$5.98.

⑧DORATI'S sharp, crisp baton is used to stunning effect in these colorful pieces. Those who object to Stokowski's sentimentalized versions will welcome Dorati's vigor and healthy passion, which make the hackneyed Liszt *Second Rhapsody* especially refreshing. The virtuosity of the London Symphony is hardly a hindrance, and Mercury has created a veritable stereo demonstration disc. Highly recommended.

—D.H.M.

•  
**FAURÉ:** *Eight Pièces Brèves, Op. 84*; *Nine Préludes, Op. 103*; *Five Impromptus*; *Valse Caprice No. 1 in A, Op. 30*; *Barcarolles Nos. 3 in G flat, Op. 42, and 9 in A minor, Op. 101*; *Nocturne No. 3 in A flat, Op. 33, No. 3*; Grant Johannesen (piano). Golden Crest set CR-4030, four sides, \$9.98.

▲CERTAINLY a sizable hole in the Schwann Catalog is being filled by Golden Crest's projected recording of the complete piano works of Gabriel Fauré. The capable American pianist Grant Johannesen has been assigned the performing chores; from the playing heard in the first volume at hand, one can expect a worthwhile series. Much of Fauré's keyboard output is little known, for reasons which, however lamentable, can be understood. Most of the piano works do not project well in a large concert arena, for many of them are miniatures with little dynamic contrast and low-voltage emotional output. They are not the easiest pieces to

play; they require scrupulous attention to tone and rhythm. Moreover, Fauré's use of harmony sometimes gives certain pieces a discursive quality that precludes a sense of inevitability. All these things have militated against a body of music which is distinguished for melodic beauty, trans-

parency of sound, and evocation of mood. Because Fauré's piano works are best heard in small, intimate areas, the phonograph should become their strongest ally. It is good to see this music at last get a fighting chance to contact today's audiences. —C.J.L.

## Morini-Firkusny: another partnership of equals

**FRANCK:** *Sonata in A for Violin and Piano*; **MOZART:** *Sonata in E flat for Violin and Piano*, K. 481; Erica Morini (violin), Rudolf Firkusny (piano); Decca DL-10038, \$4.98, or Stereo DL-710038, \$5.98.

(*Frank*)

Yehudi and Hephzibah Menuhin...Capitol 7215  
 ⑧THE last few years have been extraordinarily rich in duo-sonata recordings which are the products of a genuine "partnership of equals", i.e., two major performers are so evenly matched and so totally in agreement that we are not inclined to praise one more highly than the other. The Menuhins, Grumiaux-Haskil, Szeryng-Rubinstein and Senofsky-Graffman are a few such partnerships which immediately come to mind. To this list we may now safely add Morini-Firkusny, two distinguished solo artists who combined their talents, for what I assume was the first time, last year. On the basis of this recording, their first together, one might readily imagine their partnership to be of at least a decade's standing.

I find it interesting to note that Morini-Firkusny are the possessors of the only entry under Mozart's K. 481 in the current listings, while we can choose from among eight versions—this one included—of the Franck. It is not that I have any aversion to the latter, particularly when set forth with such technical expertness and passion as these performers bring to it, but rather that the Mozart is a far more meaningful work to me; in it the performers' unanimity of approach is even more impressively conveyed, for here the balance of the two instruments is so delicately constructed that the slightest departure from the strictest ensemble views could be catastrophic. These musicians

not only avoid the pitfalls but make us believe that they are non-existent. Throughout the Mozart side I feel that seeming spontaneity which is actually the product of the most exhaustive study and preparation. Their approach is warm and strong without being in the spirit of the nineteenth century. A moment in the performance which gives me particular pleasure is the A Flat-B Flat-D Flat-C-B Flat-C-E Flat-D figure heard in the development of the first movements. This little snatch sounds like a study for the chief theme of the finale of the "Jupiter", written three years later. I have heard this striking passage played with a sudden mysterious drop in volume and diminution of speed, as if to signal the presence of something of shattering import. This dramatic device not only breaks the continuity of the music but short-changes the considerable quantity of music which remains. With Morini and Firkusny, individual portions are treated as part of a greater whole. The passage referred to will impress itself on the listener even more potently when treated in such fashion. *Basta!* This is a splendid record, and Decca has engineered it with utmost attention to balance and clarity. —H.G.

•  
**A. GABRIELI:** *Motet, "Peter Peccavi"; Missa "Pater peccavi"; Motet, "Angelus ad pastores";* Choir of the Capella di Treviso directed by Msgr. Giovanni d'Alessi. Vox DL-680, \$4.98.

▲FEW indeed are the Italian choirs which are really capable of doing justice to Renaissance polyphony. Its idiom seems strangely incomprehensible to their musical sensibilities after the impact of Verdi and Puccini. Whether the blame

rests on the conductors or on the intractable choristers themselves is not to be settled here. At least the present choir is an exception to some degree. To be sure, its members do blast their way through this music with a fine disregard for the niceties of precision and accurate intonation, much less for anything resembling subtlety. The worst offenders in this respect are the boys in the choir. Their singing also has a piercingly nasal and acid quality which is quite jolting at first. But this very piercing quality is at least better than the thick vibrato of the usual women in most other Italian choirs, who join their menfolk to huff and puff along their way as if they were singing third-rate Donizetti or low-grade early Verdi opera choruses. In addition the present choir, for all its faults, at least has a better sense of polyphonic lines in comparison with most of its domestic rivals. One can become adjusted to its sound, and every so often when they all get cracking they produce some really exciting sound. Finally, whereas the architectural polyphony of the Roman school—Palestrina *et al.*—cannot survive the usual modern Italian buffeting, the music of the Venetian School is much less concerned with contrapuntal delicacies (although it often does have them) and more with richness of sonority and splendor of sound, something which this group can often approach. The most successful of its four releases in the earlier days of Vox is still the first of its three mixed programs (PL-8030, containing, incidentally, the *Sanctus* and *Benedictus* of this Mass), which really deserves to be reissued, even if the succeeding two (PL-8610 and 8790) are not. As for the present record, it was originally PL-8370. While this is not the best presentation this Mass might have, it is worth having available again as one of Vox' current reissues. Since this is a "parody Mass" it was a wise idea to preface it with the composer's own motet on which it was based, even if the motet, and its companion at the end, are rather raggedly performed. The cathedral acoustics are spacious and impressive, and the sound is still clean.

—J.W.B.

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## *A record of major significance from DGG*

**G. GABRIELI:** *Canzon II* à 6; *Canzon XIII septimi et octavi toni* à 12; *Canzon I* à 4, "*La spiritala*"; *Sonata pian e forte* à 8; *Sonata con tre violini* à 3; *Canzon VIII* à 8; *Canzon XIV* à 12; **MASCHERA:** *Canzon V* à 4, "*La maggia*"; **A. GABRIELI:** *Ricercare IX del XII tono* à 4; **VIADANA:** *Canzon* à 8, "*La Padovana*"; **MASSAINO:** *Canzon XXXIV* à 8; *Canzon XXXV* à 16; Concert Ensemble of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, conducted by August Wenzinger. Deutsche Grammophon Archive Stereo AC-73154, \$6.98.

§THIS is a record of major significance and interest. We have here the first complete record devoted to the instrumental music of Giovanni Gabrieli and the Venetian School which attempts to treat this music in authentic fashion. It is of interest, of course, to have the survey broadened by the inclusion of the other composers, Florentio Maschera (c. 1540-c. 1580), Andrea Gabrieli (c. 1510-1586), Ludovico Grossi Viadana (1564-1645), and Tiburtio Massaino (?-c. 1610); and none of these works has appeared here on records before. But the figure of greatest importance here is, without doubt, Giovanni Gabrieli (1557-1612) himself; hence I have arbitrarily listed his contributions first above, even though they actually follow those of his (mostly elder) colleagues on the record.

There have been recordings of Giovanni's instrumental music before, and, indeed, four of those here are available elsewhere. But a comparison will show the value of the new release. The performance of the *Canzon I*, "*La spiritala*", on Columbia MS-6117) is a typical E. Power Biggs spectacle with an organ arbitrarily interspersed with a brass group; but at least the older recording for Esoteric (ES-503) is as acceptable in its way as is the performance here, by four gambas with an organ. The case is different, however, with the *Canzon XIII, septimi et octavi toni*, and the *Canzon XIV (septimi toni, No. 1)*, both à 12.

Both are played in a Period release (SPL (S)-734), in a hard-driven manner with brassy brasses. On this record both pieces are done by a purposely multi-colored group of diverse strings and winds. It is true that a homogeneous ensemble of modern instruments may make for more clarity, and is usually more directly appealing to the average listener today. And certainly an honest performance in such terms has its validity and satisfaction. But such were not the sounds the composer and his contemporaries expected. The Venetian School, after all, reveled in color, great richness, variety, and contrasts of color—and in instrumental timbres somewhat different from our own. To know this music truly one should give the composer's intentions a chance.

Consider, further, the final comparison, the well-known *Sonata pian e forte*. There are four competing versions (disregarding an old one on *Anthologie sonore* AS-12, now out of print, and an overblown arrangement played by the Philadelphia Orchestra on Columbia ML-5129). The two stereo versions, for Bach Guild (BGS-5037 and Westminster (WST-14081), use simply brass ensembles and nothing else. Another recording goes to the opposite extreme in an arrangement for "double string orchestra" for London (originally on LS-686, then on LL-1321, now on CM-9144). The only recording to make a real effort in the right direction was the first one on LP, for Esoteric (ES-503 again), which used a violin in an otherwise all-brass group. But to hear, by contrast, the totally different sound of the present performance is to understand more than ever before how the daringly varied and imaginative hues of Venetian music amazed and excited contemporary Europe, just as did the same qualities in Venetian painting.

The ensemble here is a large and diversified one, totalling five violins, two violas, six various gambas, three recorders, four lutes, one cornet, two shawms, two dulcians, six trombones, harpsichord, and organ;





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the entire group is never used all at once, of course, but from this pool different combinations and groupings of instruments are drawn with great care, imagination, and—especially when winds are used—success. These are all sensitive musicians, and those who think that authenticity necessarily means uninteresting dullness or unsatisfying pedantry should listen carefully. The stereo sound has an excellent quality of presence, with weakness only in its slightly inadequate distinctions between separate groups in multi-choir pieces. After all, such pieces were designed for the spacious separations of the great San Marco galleries; hence, stereo separation should be used in full. But in all other respects the true Venetian sonorities have at last been given an excitingly authentic demonstration.

No collector of old music can afford to miss this record. He will come away from it with the self-assurance: "This is how it really must have been". —J.W.B.

●  
**HANDEL:** *Trio Sonatas for Two Oboes and Figured Bass: No. 3 in B flat; No. 2 in D minor; No. 6 in D; No. 4 in F*; Melvin Kaplan, Ronald Roseman (oboes), Morris Newman (bassoon), Albert Fuller (harpsichord). Washington Records WR-420, \$4.98.

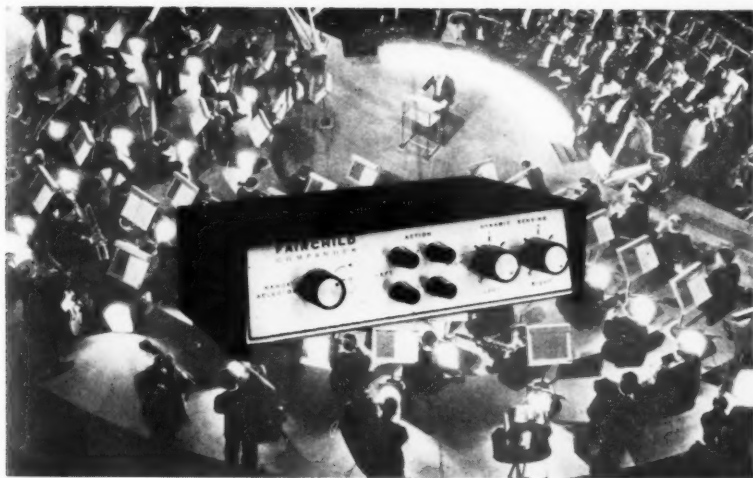
▲THESE works do not belong to either of the two sets of *Trio Sonatas* which Handel published in his lifetime as Op. 2 (1733), consisting of nine Sonatas, and Op. 5 (1739), comprising seven. There is actually a third set, of six, which date from his youth. Exactly *when* in his youth is a matter of debate. The year 1696 has become the designation by which they are now known, but surely Handel's eleventh year is too early. The author of the admirable jacket notes here suggests the Italian period of 1706-10, which is certainly feasible. What is striking about them, however, is how distinctly Handelian they sound, with much of the composer's mature style showing through. As far as I can find, none of them ever has been recorded before, save for the opening movement of No. 3 in a poor recording that was part of Decca's long-deleted album (DX-106) entitled "2,000 Years of Music".

What we are offered here are four of the six. In such ventures it is really a pity that a full set cannot be given: surely we are entitled to the remaining two, for which there is even room on this one record. Yet we should not complain over-much, for what is here is excellently done. The playing is skillful, polished, and sensitive. The decision to use a bassoon for the continuo part in preference to the usual viola da gamba or violoncello is completely in accord with baroque practice as well as with aural logic. The recording tends to overemphasize the oboes, and the harpsichord is needlessly distant; otherwise the sound is very good. Many listeners may prefer not to take all four in one dose, but as individual pieces they should not fail to please. In all, then, a distinguished release. This is what the small labels are for, and they deserve our gratitude and support. —J.W.B.

●  
**HANDEL-BEECHAM:** *Love in Bath*; Ilse Hollweg (soprano); Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Angel Stereo S-35504, \$5.98.

©SHAW once suggested that Sir Thomas Beecham was very fond of eighteenth-century music, but did not care much for some specific pieces. The remark was in regard to some Mozart which Shaw thought Beecham misrepresented because it did not fit into the latter's conception of what eighteenth-century music should be. If one carries this conception back further to the case of Beecham's Handel, one might be tempted to postulate the corollary that Beecham loved eighteenth-century music, but didn't really understand much of it.

Before I am stoned to death for blasphemy against the man who has been so widely touted as the greatest interpreter of Handel in our century—the man who, moreover, almost single-handedly rescued Handel from the crushing Victorian "festival" treatment—let us consider exactly what his dealings with the composer have been. In point of fact, Beecham's Handel has fallen precisely into either of two categories. The first, that of the present recording, is Beecham's



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own arrangements and adaptations of Handel extracts, usually from operas, into ballet scores, in his own rich orchestrations. The second is that of oratorio, usually extensively revised and always heavily re-orchestrated. The justification for the former category was that Beecham's arrangements enabled us to hear music that would otherwise be neglected and ignored. As for the fact that such music sounded vastly different from the way the composer wrote it, the justification for both this and the second category was that Handel's music deserved to be updated. So we have such Beecham dicta as this:

There is a heretical belief in many quarters that 18th-Century composers were frail and delicate creatures who liked tenuity of sound and should be treated today with tender concern. This is against all historical evidence, particularly in the cases of Handel and Mozart, both of whom revelled in resounding splendor of tone, as we know well from the complaints of the former and the correspondence of the latter.

No one should disagree with this premise: the question is, what kind of "splendor of tone" did Handel revel in? There is only one answer to the "If Handel Were Alive Today" school of thought: by all means, Handel would have made use of the vaster orchestral resources of our day, as Sir Thomas assures us. But if he had lived in our period, his total style would be different anyway, and he would not be the Handel we know at all, orchestrally or otherwise. But Handel did *not* live in our own time. He was an early eighteenth-century composer, and to impose a late nineteenth- or early twentieth-century orchestration on his music is a howling anachronism which completely distorts it. I feel sure that if someone advocated adding a baroque façade to Westminster Abbey, or rebuilding the Parthenon with added flying buttresses and spires, he would be carted off to a padded cell forthwith. What logic is there in doing the same thing to Handel?—especially when his own orchestration, if given a fair chance itself, can usually be extraordinarily effective in proper relationship to its musical context.

Unfortunately, some conductors have a tendency to become egotistical. In the case of Beecham we are dealing with a veritable colossus of egomania. But he could always get away with this quality because at the same time he never failed to delight us. For Beecham was, we must not forget, one of the very greatest musicians and performers of our time, or of any other, and it is always difficult to separate what he did from the superb way in which he did it. And so he could afford to sit back and dismiss "the arm-chair purists" with the reminder that Handel, Haydn, Mozart, etc., were practicing musicians of genius, and he, Beecham, is a practicing musician of genius; so therefore he knows what is good for the music of Handel, Haydn, Mozart, etc., as well as they did (or better), and they would have approved of his little improvements. A thumb-nose to anyone who did not enjoy the results! And, by George, we *did* enjoy the results, even if our consciences sulked. After all, who could fail to respond to Beecham's zest, vitality, and polish, even if he was committing musical murder at times?

All of these comments are, of course, basically irrelevant to this record. But, then, Handel also is basically irrelevant to this record. If one can forget about Handel, the real Handel, one can without doubt enjoy it enormously. The score had its genesis under the title of "The Great Elopement", and as a popular suite it flourished for a while in a recording available here (years ago) as RCA Victor LHMV-1030. But with the demise of the RCA-HMV affiliation this release passed into limbo. Now Beecham has expanded the score and served it up anew. The scenario is his own: no, the title is not "Love in the bath", but refers to the town of Bath, scene of the elopement of the future playwright Sheridan with the beautiful daughter of a local notable. The music as Sir Thomas spins it out is, to be sure, beautiful and delectable. (But then any choice cut of steak will make good hamburger if someone grinds it up.) Miss Hollweg sings very prettily the little song inserted for her, an Italian aria from "*Il Pastor fido*". The stereo sound adds

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And so, there he goes, once more snubbing the "antiquarians", and strewing delights to those who wish only to enjoy. Make no mistake about it, this record is thoroughly enjoyable. Save for some Handel, one could wish for no more. —J.W.B.

## 'The Makropulos Matter'

By JEAN BOWEN

IN VIEW of the vitality of Janček's music, it is hard to believe that so much of it was written when he was past sixty. Indeed, he is perhaps unique in that he only reached fruition, both personally and artistically, at a time when most human beings begin to feel the pangs of their own mortality. By contrast, the greater part of his life was passed in frustration. Oppressed by Austria's domination of his native country, married to a woman with whom he was in frequent intellectual strife, shattered by the early death of an only daughter, and worn by the daily attrition of a mediocre career, he was, until 1916 at least, a defeated man. "I no longer saw any worth in my work", he said. "I had become convinced that no one would ever notice anything of mine. I was quite down—my pupils had begun to advise me how to compose and how to orchestrate". But with the longed-for production of "*Jenufa*" at Prague in 1916, his fate reversed itself. The recognition he then began to receive and the stimulating friendship he formed

with Mrs. Kamila Stössel acted as catalysts to long inert ideas. He began to write and during the next ten years poured out a constant stream of music. "I feel as though I were living in a fairy-tale", he said. "I compose and compose, as though something were urging me on". The creative demon did indeed drive him as it would commonly drive a much younger man, but in his case the return of youthful energy was, most happily for his art, enriched by the wisdom accrued by long experience.

Among other things, the experience of life taught him that it must at some point end. In "*The Makropulos Matter*" (or "*Secret*") from which excerpts are here available for the first time on long-playing records, he states quite clearly that life cannot violate its own natural rhythm without terrible consequences for the one who lives it. Emilia Marty, a lovely opera singer, has drunk the elixir of youth and is doomed to watch mortal generations succeed each other while her own isolated life continues. With the advantage of

### JANČEK: "*The Makropulos Matter*"

—excerpts; Zdeňka Hrnčířová (soprano), Beno Blachut (tenor), Teodor Srubař (baritone), Rudolf Asmus (bass), Milada Musilová (soprano), Rudolf Vonásek (tenor), Chorus and orchestra of the Prague National Theatre conducted by Jaroslav Vogel; "*Jenufa*"—excerpts; Marie Steinerová (mezzo-soprano), Libuše Domanínská (soprano), Orchestra of the Janček Theatre in Brno conducted by František Jílek; Prague National Theatre Orchestra conducted by Milan Sachs; "*The Cunning Little Vixen*"—finale; Zdeněk Kroupa (bass), Libuše Domanínská

(soprano), Orchestra of the Janček Theatre in Brno conducted by Bohumír Liska. Supraphon LPV-450, \$5.98 (Artia import).

JANČEK: *Folk Nocturnes*; Czech Singers' Chorus, Josef Hůla (piano), conducted by Jan Kühn; *Songs of Hradcany*; Wolf's Footprints; Jadwiga Wysockzanska and Marie Bakalová (sopranos), Hynek Kašík (flute), Tosa Součková (harp), Tatana Svábová (piano), Moravian Women Teachers' Chorus conducted by Břetislav Bakala. Supraphon LPV-475, \$5.98 (Artia import).

first-hand knowledge gained several generations back, she intervenes in a lawsuit to the advantage of a young man who is her great-grandson. In an attempt to provide proof of what she reveals, she forges a will. Her fraud is discovered, and only by confessing the terrible secret of her life can she convince the litigants of the truth of what she has told them. To destroy the secret of the elixir forever, they burn its recipe, and as it burns, Emilia, or Elina Makropulos, as she originally was named, released at last from her intolerable longevity, dies. "Poor 300 year-old beauty!", Janáček said of her; "People took her for a thief, for a heartless animal. . . and her fault? That she was doomed to live too long a time. I was sorry for her". The excerpts recorded here are as enigmatic as the lovely Elina. Unidentified by act or person singing, they are difficult to place in context without a score or libretto, neither of which is easily available. They do, however, in spite of reservations one may have about the quality of the singing, reveal a composer who was capable of sustained and impassioned operatic writing and whose sense of the telling dramatic effect was sure and powerful.

"*The Cunning Little Vixen*", based on a series of newspaper sketches, is another work of Janáček's maturity (the complete recording reviewed last April on page 653). It tells the story of a vixen—ho, captured by a forester, makes her way back to the forest and raises a family there. Little Fox Sharpears, as Janáček describes her, "pilfered and killed, yet. . . is capable of generous feelings. . ." Toward the end of the opera she is killed by a poacher. After her death the forester, who has grown old, looks for her. "Spring is in the woods yet old age is also apparent. The forest with all its animal folk appears in a dream to the forester. The old man seeks his Sharpears but she is gone. Suddenly a little cub, exactly like Sharpears, comes gamboling to his feet. 'Just like her mother.' And so evil and good make their round through life anew." Even from this, his own brief description of the work, it is apparent that Janáček has fashioned an opera that

transcends the triviality of its raw material. For the problem upon which it comments is another manifestation of the problem about which "*The Makropulos Secret*" had so much to say. Here, however, life runs its natural course and the forester is reconciled to its mutability. It is his closing monologue, perhaps the most touching moment in the work, that is heard here, sung with great sensitivity by Zdeněk Kroupa.

The vital force that filled Janáček's later works was prophesied in "*Jenufa*", the work of his middle years. In it, his ideas of dramatic writing find their first mature expression. He once said: "The art of dramatic writing is to compose a melodic curve which will, as if by magic, reveal immediately a human being in one definite phase of his existence. . . On the stage it is not always the best word for vocalising that we require; we need the every-day word, its melodic turn, torn from life. . ." And this is what he has given us in "*Jenufa*". There is no doubt that Moravian folk culture, in which he was profoundly interested, shaped to some extent his musical idiom. But this influence can be over-emphasized. He said, in a letter of May 30, 1916, that "there is not a single foreign or folk melody in *Jenufa*. Even the recruiting song and the wedding song. . . are my own. . ." And the dramatic force, too, is his own. It rings through both *Jenufa*'s prayer, sung here with conviction if not with compelling beauty of sound by Libuše Doormanínská, and Kostelnitschka's aria, whose emotional points are fully realized by the communicative artistry of Marie Steinerová.

Quite different from the operatic excerpts are the short pieces for women's chorus. They are, except for the narrative, *The Wolf Track*, lyrical rather than dramatic and cast in a musical language responsive to mood and color rather than to events. The 1916 *Songs from Hradcany*, with their pensive solo flute and harp accompaniment, describe three places in the old city of Prague—Alchemists' Lane, The Weeping Fountain, and Belvedere Palace. This music is not simple; any notion of folk derivation that clings to it



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must be qualified by an awareness of the original sounds and textures that Janáček has used. *The Wolf Track* is on most counts less interesting. It recounts the old story of a jealous older husband who finds his wife unfaithful and kill her lover. It has the accents of Janáček's operatic idiom without the emotional range that the larger form allows. Most enchanting, however, are the *Folk Nocturnes* for women's chorus and piano, composed in 1906 as part of his 26 *Folk Ballads*. These simple duets are settings of Moravian folk songs, and there is in them something remote from Western musical culture. The irregular rhythms and the modal contours of some of the melodic lines, are elements of an elusive musical idiom that speaks of the things in nature that are part of the common experience of all who live close to her. Of them Janáček said: "I have discovered something entirely new and peculiar in folk music. In the evening, after sunset, the girls (of the small villages) gather in the yard. The one with the best voice stands in front of the others and sings. The others then join in, holding hands and standing close together; their song is most strange and seems to spread out over the hill-tops, and, in the distance, dissolve into the water flowing through the dark forest." As sung here by the Czech Singers' Chorus, this music is as fresh as when Janáček first noted it, and as full of the remembered poetry of countless summer nights.

●  
**KABALEVSKY:** *Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 55; USSR Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Dmitri Kabalevsky. Artia MK-1546, \$4.98.

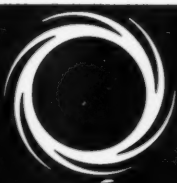
▲THERE are ten sections to these "musical sketches to Shakespeare's tragedy." The fact that whether "Morning in Verona" or a "Lyrical Dance" is being depicted the music is substantially unaffected in general character points up the moral that naïveté is permissible, provided it is stated in a superb manner. Kabalevsky is a superb exponent of Russian tradition, and for that phrase we mean Soviet contemporaryism. How musical history has telescoped in the USSR! Present time hangs on the past in

this music. It's flavorsome, tuny, nice to listen to, nice to read by. Kabalevsky's technique is enumerated by employing the clearest ideas within a decided and non-complex exposition of form. His music is underpinned with a Tchaikovskyian brace of lighter weight. The tenets of non-innovation, the purposeful ideology of creative enthusiasm without contact of modernism, describes Kabalevsky. It becomes a little stuffy; it also is somewhat unimportant. One prays for a little pro and con in the music but it's all fully protected from that. The best point about this recording is that it isn't still another recording of *The Comedians*. —A.C.

●  
**KODÁLY:** *Summer Night* (1929); *Concerto for Orchestra* (1939); Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Zoltán Kodály. Deutsche Grammophon Stereo SLP.M 138 687, \$6.98.

⑧THE profound originality of Kodály is to be found in his extraordinary chamber music, the *Psalmus Hungaricus*, and the music for "*Háry János*". His orchestral music is colorful, it is expertly balanced and generally interesting. I am not damning with faint praise, but rather contrasting Kodály's output with impartial (personal) division. In the works for orchestra the two recorded here are of minor importance. The major point of this disc is the composer's conductorial imprint.

Intimacy pervades the earlier piece. (It should be translated as "Summer Evening," and in fact the liner notes do refer to it in that way.) Because of its youthful creation (written in 1906 and revised twenty-three years later) Kodály's characteristic personality is not to be recognized. Kodály was still too close to his academic study and his newly-found folkloristic *bona fides* to stride fully on the mature stage. In this poetic rhapsody native musical curves companion impressionistic patterns—Kodály displays an ambivalent palette. In the Concerto the frictions, dynamics, and tonal signature pertinent to Kodály are found. But while the idiom is unmistakable (as are the neoclassic squared rhythms) and the



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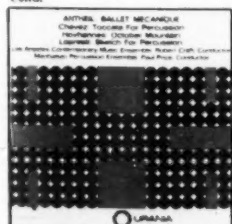
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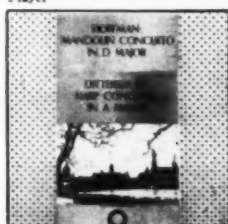
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results pleasant, the total is rather unimportant. The arguments are somewhat tedious; the music is almost pretentious. The cool sweat of the solo cello sonata and the string duo is absent. Performance and sound are both well accomplished.

—A.C.

**LISZT:** *Mazeppa; Hungarian Fantasia for Piano and Orchestra; Hungarian Rhapsodies Nos. 4 and 5*; Shura Cherkassky (piano); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Herbert von Karajan. Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft Stereo SLPM-138 692, \$6.98.

⑧HERE is another fine example of DGG's superior stereo recording technique and flawless surfaces. The separation is so natural that one is never conscious of stereo, as such, but only of the clarity with which everything comes through in its rightful place in the tonal spectrum. Also, this disc should be sufficient to convince the doubting Thomases that the Berlin Philharmonic is one of the great virtuoso orchestras of our time. And the redoubtable von Karajan proves to be a Liszt interpreter who values the substance above the tinsel. The works themselves attest to the fact that Liszt, who was the master transcriber of them all, could transform piano pieces into glowing orchestral scores with the same discerning eye and ear for what is instrumentally right that he showed in reversing the process.

*Mazeppa*, originally one of the *Transcendental Études* for piano, went through several transformations as a piano piece before Liszt turned it into a symphonic poem for orchestra. As the latter, it is a new and vastly superior creation. So is the *Hungarian Fantasia*, which is a reworking of the 14th Rhapsody. Nor do the two Rhapsodies featured on this disc lose any of their effectiveness in orchestral garb. The 4th, which is none other than the familiar 12th in the piano version, is translated into the new medium with just those structural changes that will allow the orchestral instruments to speak the piano's message with *their* tongues. The somber, brooding, crepuscular 5th Rhapsody,

in E minor, gains, if anything, by its transfer to the strings, especially where the theme is assigned to the cellos, as in the opening and closing pages. Just as the brasses of the Berlin Philharmonic seem to outdo all others in glorious clangor in *Mazeppa*, the strings here have a melting quality of their own, and unlike that of any other orchestra, that is wonderfully expressive in capturing and sustaining the twilight mood of the piece.

If this disc is a brilliant showcase for the Berlin Philharmonic, it is no less so for Shura Cherkassky, whose masterly handling of the solo portions of the *Hungarian Fantasia* leaves little to be desired. It is piano-playing that recalls in its essence the art of Josef Hofmann, whose protégé Cherkassky was. No pianist can be accorded greater praise than that. At the same time, I do not feel that Mr. Cherkassky brings the empathy, or understanding, to this piece that Ozan Marsh does in his recording of the work with the Boston "Pops" Orchestra under Arthur Fiedler (RCA Victor LM-6082). Comparisons in this instance need not be odious. One is an exhibition of great piano playing *per se*, the other of great Liszt playing. Both are worthy of a place in any pianophile's library.

—R.K.

**MOZART:** *Piano Concerto No. 25 in C, K. 503; Piano Concerto No. 27 in B Flat, K. 595*; Fou Ts'ong (piano); Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Victor Desarzens. Westminster XWN-18955, \$4.98. Stereo WST-14136, \$5.98.

(K. 595)  
Backhaus, Böhm ..... London CM-9140/CS-6141  
Schnabel, Barbirolli ..... Angel COLH-67  
Serkin, Schneider ..... Columbia ML-5013

⑧BOTH concerti are played in very relaxed, nimble fashion. This K. 503 is certainly among the best current versions, although for me no recording has yet replaced that by Carl Seeman and Fritz Lehmann once available on Decca DL-9658. Fou Ts'ong, although his approach is light and rather undynamic, manages to expose many of the beauties of this work. A little less caution might have made it a truly distinguished performance. Desarzens' work shows no

great individuality of thought, but his conception is clearly attuned to the soloist's wishes. K. 595 suffers from an excess of the qualities to be found on the over-side. In any event the array of recorded competition in the B Flat Concerto is so formidable that a young pianist has little chance to draw special attention to himself. Withal, there are many good things on this record and Westminster has given clear, lifelike reproduction to piano and orchestra. —H.G.

**MOZART:** *Concerto in C for Flute, Harp and Orchestra, K. 299; Concerto No. 2 in D for Flute and Orchestra, K. 314; Andante in C for Flute and Orchestra, K. 315; Aurèle Nicolet (flute); Rose Stein (harp); Munich Bach Orchestra conducted by Karl Richter. Telefunken TC-8045, \$1.98, Stereo TCS-18045, \$2.98.*

(K. 299)  
Barwahser, Berghout, Van Beinum... Epic LC-3456  
(K. 314, 315)  
Schaffer, Kurtz... Capitol G-7135/SG-7135  
[WITH this release Telefunken once more affirms its interest in making music not quite in the "standards" category available at a low price, and giving us performances completely on a level with those selling at five and six dollars. Nicolet has, during the past few years, become known through his recordings as a master flutist, possessing a warm, smooth tone and brilliant technique. Stein is an excellent harpist who may be remembered from an older Telefunken recording (antedating that label's rebirth as an economy affiliate, in this country, of London) under the direction of Rolf Reinhardt. Richter leads all three works with sparkle and humor, and his orchestra responds admirably. The mono sound is good, but the stereo, in spite of moments of shrillness, adds more luster to the flute tone. —H.G.]

**MOZART:** *Symphony No. 41 in C, K. 551; Symphony No. 35 in D, K. 385; Columbia Symphony Orchestra conducted by Bruno Walter. Columbia Stereo MS-6255, \$5.98.*

WALTER must have special affection for these two symphonies; he has recorded them so often. These latest ver-

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sions are, of course, the beneficiaries of improved sonics; and the orchestra that Columbia assembles for Walter in Los Angeles has a body of tone in keeping with Mozart (or Beethoven) if not with the demands of something like the Bruckner Ninth Symphony.

These performances, with their fine balances, their clear, singing melodic lines, are proof of Walter's sensitivity and his years of experience. So rich are they in detail that I cannot imagine anyone not discovering or reacquainting himself with aspects of Mozart's art so often hidden in these works, however, frequently we may encounter them in our concert halls these days. Hear the divine slow movement from the "Jupiter" as an example of what I mean.

I find the first movement of the "Haffner" sluggish and occasionally unanimous in execution. Some may object to the leisurely tempi of the minuets in both symphonies. In all other respects, I welcome this issue and recommend it highly.

—C.J.L.

**RACHMANINOFF:** *Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor, Op. 30*; Byron Janis (piano); London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Antal Dorati. Mercury Stereo SR-90283, \$5.98

⑧LIKE two or three other companies, Mercury has begun making its recordings on 35-mm. magnetic film. The results one hears in this brilliant issue foreshadow an industry-wide use of film before long. The absence of distortion, except toward the very ends of this record, which is cut right to the seal, the virtual elimination of background noise (particularly tape hiss), and the wide dynamic range that this new technique makes possible give one a most convincing illusion of reality.

This is the second time Byron Janis, the gifted American pianist, has recorded the Rachmaninoff Third Concerto. The first one, for RCA Victor with Munch and the Boston Orchestra, was impressive, but this one is even more so. Except for a few spots and the cadenza in the first movement, this performance has an ease the older one did not possess. Janis' virtuosity is more commanding, too, and

in this dazzling exhibition there are several passages brought off with a kind of *diablerie* that reminds one of Horowitz's playing of this music in the classic 78 r.p.m. recording. Dorati's support is firm and his work finely integrated with that of the soloist.

Janis has thus far been heard on Mercury in nothing but the big, hit-them-between-the-eyes Russian piano concertos. He is capable of making a great deal more music than he has been allowed to offer in this repertory.

—C.J.L.

**RAVEL:** *Daphnis and Chloe* (complete). Boston Symphony Orchestra and New England Conservatory Chorus conducted by Charles Munch; RCA Victor Stereo LSC-2568, \$5.98. **Same;** New York Philharmonic and Schola Cantorum Chorus conducted by Leonard Bernstein; Columbia Stereo MS-6260, \$5.98.

⑧THERE is no clear-cut choice between these two new issues. Both of the performances have over-all merit despite some shortcomings. Munch's contribution is stylish, atmospheric, neatly played, but sometimes, for want of more rhythmic vigor, a bit lifeless. Bernstein's is animated, colorful, but occasionally coarse in expression and in surface finish.

Selection based on recording—so important is conveying the demi-tints of this score—is not easy to make, either. Although Columbia cannot begin to match Victor's sonics, which are superb in range of frequency and dynamics and in impressive stereo spread, its sound nevertheless is somewhat better balanced (the Boston violins are often hard to hear in passages where they should be clearly audible). Then, too, the Victor pickup is too distant for this taste, whereas the Columbia sound reaches the listener from a point that is not only pleasing to the ear but consistent with clarity of texture.

One of the landmarks of LP was Munch's earlier recording of the complete *Daphnis*. In its stereo version (Victor LSC-1893), it still strikes me as the supreme version of Ravel's masterwork. Because it is now apt to be withdrawn, it should be acquired at once.

—C.J.L.



**SCHUBERT:** *Songs for Male Chorus:* *Widerspruch; Nachthelle; Liebe; 23rd Psalm; Geist der Liebe; Der Gondelfahrer; Die Nachtigall; Das Dörfchen; Im gegenwärtigen Vergangenes;* Akademie Kammerchor conducted by Ferdinand Grossmann (with Arnold Kment, solo tenor, in *Nachthelle*). Lyrichord LL-99, \$4.98

▲MY review in the December, 1960, ARG of Lyrichord's re-release of the old Vox recording of Schubert's *Gesang der Geister* and Mass in G concluded with the following rhetorical question: "Can we now hope for a Lyrichord reissue of the Schubert Songs for Male Chorus, formerly Vox PL-6870?" We were not made to wait for long. Not only is the music in this recital as beautiful as ever, but the sound has been immeasurably improved in its transfer to this label. The single song which seems to have attracted the greatest number of listeners when the original Vox release appeared was *Nachthelle*, an indescribably moving picture of a clear winter night, for solo tenor, chorus and piano. It is unquestionably a little masterpiece, but by no means the only one to be found herein. The twenty-third psalm, in Moses Mendelssohn's translation, inspired Schubert to create another of his most ravishing melodies. *Geist der Liebe*, with its delightful guitar accompaniment, could serve as an exemplar of the manner in which Schubert was able to compress a maximum of expressivity and variety into a piece less than five minutes long. *Der Gondelfahrer* is a superbly delicate archetype of "boat on the water under starry skies" music; its gentle, rocking melody has much in common with that of *Die Nachtigall*, although the soft, slow opening melody of the latter is interrupted midway by a charming allegretto section, with the guitar again providing a novel and piquant accompaniment. *Im gegenwärtigen Vergangenes*, a setting of Goethe's wonderfully nostalgic poem, is, I think, the most beautiful of all the beautiful melodies heard on this disc. Schubert's treatment of the line *Und da duftet's wie vor alters* is an example of the type of masterly condensation of feeling into a

tiny span of notes which so much even more ambitious music seem bloated and labored. The song as a totality is filled with a delicate freshness and gentle melancholy, always simple, and typical of Schubert's genius for displaying romantic yearnings without becoming sentimental. In lesser performances than those heard on this record much of the music might fall flat, with the listener becoming quickly aware of the great quantity of key of C major to which he is being subjected. Grossmann's feeling for the music is obviously one of the greatest affection coupled with deep understanding. The small chorus is impeccable in intonation,

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remarkably sensitive to textual nuances and always lovely in tone. —H.G.

●  
**SCHUBERT:** *Trio in B Flat Major for Piano, Violin, and Cello, Op. 99*; **BEE-THOVEN:** *Variations in E Flat, Op. 44*; Trio di Trieste. Deutsche Grammophon LPM-18583, \$5.98, or Stereo SLPM-138583, \$6.98.

(Schubert)  
Badura-Skoda, J. Fournier, Janigro. . . West. 18481  
⑤THE flowing lyricism which should be at the heart of every performance of the Schubert is played down so severely by this group that the music seems startlingly dull and repetitious at times. The Trio di Trieste alternates between a herky-jerky, phrase-breaking approach which interrupts the continuity of the music and a dry propriety which deadens Schubert's marvelous melodies. In addition, I find the tight, dry sound of Libero Lana's cello quite unpleasant. The little-known Beethoven piece fares much better, with the performers unbuttoning their spirits considerably; but the Schubert should be the chief attraction, and in this case it simply is not. Superbly clear, intimate sound which inadvertently discloses some scratchy string playing. —H.G.

●  
**SCHUMANN:** *Symphony No. 4 in D minor, Op. 120*; New York Philharmonic conducted by Leonard Bernstein. Columbia ML-5656, \$4.98, or Stereo MS-6256, \$5.98.

⑥EARLY in his career as a conductor, Leonard Bernstein displayed strong sympathies with the music of the 19th-century romantic composers—with Schumann's, in particular. Time has evidently failed to dull his feeling, for his performance of the D minor Symphony has ample emotional communication despite a nervous, speedy finale and an introduction that wants a bit more exaltation and grandeur. Especially noteworthy is his phrasing of the adorable trio in the third movement. Bernstein has employed the original orchestration in his performance; and though most conductors won't use it, one wonders why. Along with the "Spring" Symphony, on which Mendelssohn gave some advice in instrumentation, the Fourth's orchestration is

actually quite serviceable in getting across Schumann's emotional content. Tinkering with the balances often robs the more intimate sections of some of their charm; a thin texture is, after all, part of their distinctive speech.

It is, however, Bernstein's performance of the *Manfred* Overture that must win our greatest admiration. The marvelous opening, in particular, is set forth with abundantly grand expression. Afterwards, there are a number of touches in dynamics and balance which serve to enhance the drama of this splendid study in *Sturm und Drang*.

The stereo recording is clean, with good separation, but it is lacking in bass.

—C.J.L.

●  
**SIBELIUS:** *Four Legends of Lemminkäinen, Op. 22*; U.S.S.R. Radio Symphony conducted by Tauno Hannikainen. MK-1558 (mono only), \$5.98 (Artia import). (46 mins.)

▲THE new cultural liaisons between Finland and her traditional enemy, Russia, would have surprised Sibelius, who died only four years ago. Close on the heels of the lavish Soviet filming of the Finnish *Kalevala* epic (not yet imported here) came Tauno Hannikainen's highly successful conducting tour of the Union, with a suitable emphasis on Finnish music. Presumably the film awakened some general Russian interest in the *Kalevala* itself—that strange mythology of a people so geographically close to them, yet ethically so remote. At any rate, MK has happily memorialized the occasion of Hannikainen's visit by bringing Sibelius' salty Lemminkäinen back into our recorded repertory, and this Moscow version of the *Legends* supersedes for us the previously deleted ones from Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Philadelphia. It is really the first recorded under a Finnish conductor, since there is virtually no recording industry in Finland herself, and it is undeniably the best to date.

Lemminkäinen is the most intriguing of the four *Kalevala* heroes about whom Sibelius continued to compose vocal and orchestral works throughout his career. Actually, only the first and last of the

Four *Legends* depict in any sense his spirited and rather impish personality. No. 2 (originally No. 3), *The Swan of Tuonela*, describes solely the black swan of death herself, and was in fact designed as the prelude to a youthful Kalevalan opera not about Lemminkäinen at all. No. 3, *Lemminkäinen in Tuonela*, further explores the darkness and gloom of Hell, and the magical endeavors of the hero's mother to bring her dismembered son back to life. There has been considerable confusion as to just which of the verses actually inspired this piece, as also in the cases of Nos. 1 and 4—a confusion compounded by Sibelius' characteristic vagueness and vacillation in the last third of his life, when such works were only beginning to be fully appreciated. And for the fact that we still have no study scores of Nos. 1 and 3, we can thank the critic Flodin, who succeeded in getting the composer to suppress them altogether from 1897 to 1934, out of his objection to their "moral tone"!

No. 1 is here entitled *Lemminkäinen and the Maidens of Saari*, and the very wording is indicative of the programmatic confusion that still persists. It seems the piece was not supposed to have anything to do with either the Isle of Saari or the maiden Kyllikki of the 11th canto, but dealt with another, unnamed island visited by Lemminkäinen in the 29th canto. (The word "*Saari*" means "island" generically, as well as a specific island in the poem.) Nevertheless Sibelius obligingly added Kyllikki to the program in 1954 instead of repudiating the error, thereby making irreparable nonsense of the musico-dramatic syntax. Herbert Glass contrives to link the right story with the wrong locale when he writes in his album notes: "No. 1] tells how the hero manages to seduce every woman on the island of Saari, much to the pleasure of all involved, as can be heard in the witty final measures, which describe the great lover's leaf-taking and the maidens' lament. . ."

As you may well perceive, these pieces are hardly noted for their uniformly dramatic inter-cohesion. An utter and unrelated contrast to the *Maidens* is provided by the beautiful *Swan of Tuonela*,

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and that's about all. (But notice how much *more* beautiful the latter is with a sharply articulated *cor anglais* part, as here, instead of the usual inclining to the amorphous!) On side 2, on the other hand, the *Lemminkäinen in Tuonela*, with its luring tension, prepares both thematically and psychologically for the tremendous burst of life-energy that characterizes the finale, *Lemminkäinen's Homecoming*, in my opinion the finest and most compelling of these movements. In this two-part sequence at least, the real symphonist is in the making. Hannikainen projects the full dramatic sweep of this music without the least hint of strain, and the sound quality, even without the benefit of stereo, is the clearest and most incisive yet heard for Op. 22. Only perhaps, the forward sound of the solo tambourine in Beecham's long-remembered (78-r.p.m.) *Homecoming* was more effective in propelling the heady rhythm of that *tour de force*; here, as in the other LPs, it can barely be detected if at all. —J.D.

•  
**SMETANA:** *Trio in G minor*, Op. 15;

**SUK:** *Elegy*, Op. 23; Suk Trio. Supraphon LVP-302, \$5.98 (Artia import).

▲THERE is double affinity in this release. Not only are a pair of Bohemian composers represented, but both works are of elegiac content. Smetana's Trio was born of tragic circumstances—the death of his daughter at the age of four and a half. The composition is mainly somber, bound in the expressive key of G minor, which only latterly changes into major; the essential doleful, tragic quality is not removed in so doing. The opening movement has recitative solo passages, which seem to imply personal affliction in musical terms. Though the second movement is more rhythmically playful, it stays in the same minor key. Moderate passages as well as a funeral section interrupt the course of the final *presto*. There is no arguing that Smetana's grief impregnates this emotional work. For even the attempt to be optimistic in the final coda does not mask the fact that through the entire work stalks the horror of a child's death.

Suk's Trio was originally for violin and

cello with accompaniment of string quartet, harp, and harmonium. The mostly moody course of the music is intended as a nostalgic picture of Visehrad (a rocky bluff overlooking the Moldau). Smetana used the same subject for the first of his cycle of six symphonic poems collectively entitled *Ma Vlast*.

There is subtle nationalism in these works, but the principal element is the cogent formal unity. Both show the combination of native feelings with classical outlines. Both realize the trio potential. And both are compositions of earnestness and undeviatingly sung chamber-music poetry. The performances are excellent; the balances of the trio medium are always difficult to accomplish, but the Czech musicians succeed admirably. The engineers are not so victorious; the sound is somewhat cramped, and deep sonic richness is at a minimum. —A.C.

•  
**J. STRAUSS:** *Emperor Waltz*, Op. 437; *Thunder and Lightning Polka*, Op. 324; *Perpetuum Mobile*, Op. 257; "Die Fledermaus" Overture; *Artist's Life Waltz*, Op. 316; *Quadrille on Themes From Verdi's "Un Ballo in Maschera"*, Op. 272; *Tritsch-Tratsch Polka*, Op. 214; *The Gypsy Baron Overture*; Philharmonia Promenade Orchestra conducted by Henry Krips. Angel Stereo S-35873, \$5.98.

⑧AS he has proved in his previous recordings of music by Suppé, Waldteufel, and, of course, Strauss, Henry Krips is a master at imparting the breath of life to this gay, light Viennese music. He is one of the few conductors around who perfectly understands that elusive Viennese "lilt", and what is more he can make this British orchestra sound born and bred in the Austrian capital. I cannot help but wish that this talented conductor would record a more varied repertoire. His brother, Josef Krips, has given us some excellent Schubert and Mozart, and Henry, too, shows qualities which might lead in this direction. He maintains superb control of orchestral balances, and he can elicit bright, sunny colors, or the most limpid, gentle textures. However this may be, the present disc

is a marvel, and Angel engineers have extended their best efforts. —D.H.M.

**R. STRAUSS:** *Don Quixote*, Op. 35; Pierre Fournier (cello); Abraham Skernick (viola); Rafael Druian (violin); The Cleveland Orchestra conducted by George Szell. Epic Stereo BC-1135, \$5.98.

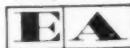
Janigro, Reiner. . . . . RCA LDS-2384  
 (BUYING a recording of *Don Quixote* a year ago was no problem at all. Reiner's performance seemed to be such an ideal fulfillment of all the musical and literary values of this score that all other versions sounded pale and imperceptive in comparison. With the passage of time—and particularly since the arrival of this latest recording from Epic—a few blemishes appear in the Victor, all of them in regard to the solo work. I would never claim that I have heard the orchestral part, to me easily the more important (*vis-à-vis* the solo), more magnificently handled than it is by Reiner. Fournier, however, shows us the qualities most clearly absent from Janigro's playing. Again, Janigro's playing is above the average; Fournier's, on the other hand, sets a new standard. Janigro's tone tends to spread, *i.e.*, it lacks incisiveness. I do not feel that he handles the part with ease. Fournier romps through it with incredible dash and ease. His tone is firm and his rhythms are always clearly defined, while Janigro tends to smudge on occasion. I also prefer Szell's violist and violinist for their greater rhythmic incisiveness. But the work of the soloists by no means makes all of a *Don Quixote*. Szell is superbly in command and his orchestra is a match for any in the world. But he does let us down at one crucial moment, that subline portion of the third variation where, as Shirley Fleming wrote in her review of the Reiner in the May, 1960, ARG, "the orchestra unfolds in its full glory." Szell diminishes this glory by not allowing for a broad enough sweep of string sound. Reiner makes this one of the great moments of recorded Strauss. The Victor and Epic stereo recordings are, each in its own way, superb. The former favors the orchestra over the soloists at all times, while the latter focuses ever so slightly on



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the soloists, with the Epic perhaps creating the more ideal balance. The choice here seems to depend on whether the listener considers the soloists (chiefly the cellist) or the conductor of greater importance. The contest between Reiner and Szell is very close, while Fournier is easily the more imposing of the cellists. That magnificent moment in the third variation of the Reiner might sway the listener in Victor's favor. All told, it would be hard to dissuade the prospective buyer from obtaining either.

—H.G.

# Beecham's last—without a thought of a farewell

(See also page 206)

**R. STRAUSS:** *Ein Heldenleben*; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Capitol SG-7250, \$5.98.

**My Favorite Overtures:** *La Gazza Ladra*; *La Cambiale di Matrimonio* (Rossini); *Le Corsaire* (Berlioz); *The Fair Melusina*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Mendelssohn); Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Capitol SG-7251, \$5.98.

⑧HELDENLEBEN was Sir Thomas Beecham's last recording, and therefore it has been issued as a memorial album. The disc of five overtures was not hastily thrown together for the occasion (as many such have been); indeed, it contains nothing we have had before.

It is saddening to realize that we can hardly expect much more new material from Sir Thomas.

Among those great leaders who made records during the golden age of conductors which lies just behind us, Beecham scored the highest percentage of gramophonic successes (by success, I mean the quality of both recording and performance). If that were no sufficient accomplishment, Beecham gave us something more—alone among his contemporaries,

he had the habit not only of ennobling many scores and giving his listeners a sense of fulfillment, but also of providing performances so filled with merriment that, for their duration at least, even a Samuel Beckett might feel good all over.

These two issues show us both aspects of Sir Thomas' mastery. The *Heldenleben*, perhaps not so vigorous and passionate as the one he committed to 78s shortly before LP, nevertheless has a noble tenderness and a manly sweetness impossible to resist. It is an autumnal performance of consummate clarity (not a line is obscure) that rises to a peak in the serene pages that bring the work to a close, and there is nothing like it on records. Only Reiner's, which is a beautifully balanced reading of strength and poetry, and Ormandy's, which is a virtuosic romp, can be admitted in the same room.

The Overtures disc (his favorites? well, they were a few of them) is full of art and good cheer. The Rossinis are pointed and projected with gusto. The Mendelssohns are dreams. How Beecham could balance a string chord! And Berlioz—all incandescence, glittering with fiery spirit and propulsion.

This record is the plume in Sir Thomas' cap, and it swaggers to us as he strides past without a thought of a farewell. —C.J.L.



NOTE: Yet another discful of Beecham encores ("More Beecham Lollipops", Angel mono and stereo 35865), is due to be released this month. The contents: *Minuet of the Will-O-Wisps* from "*Le Damnation*" and *Trojan March* from "*Les Troyens*" (Berlioz), *Cortège and Air de danse* from "*L'enfant prodigue*" (Debussy), *Dance of the Priestesses* from "*Samson et Dalila*" (Saint-Saëns), *Waltz* from "*Eugen Onegin*" (Tchaikovsky), *Entr'acte No. 2* from *Thamos, King of Egypt* (Mozart), and *Juliet's Sleep* from "*Romeo et Juliette*" (Gounod). —Ed.

**VIVALDI:** *Concerto in F for Bassoon, Strings, & Continuo* (tomo 266; Fanna VIII No. 20; Pincherle 305); *Concerto in D minor ("Madrigalesco") for Strings and Continuo* (tomo 36; F. XI No. 10; P. 86); *Concerto in D ("La Pastorella") for Flute, Oboe, Violin, Bassoon, and Continuo* (tomo 154; F. XII No. 29; P. 204); *Sonata in B flat for Two Violins and Continuo* (tomo 24; F. XIII No. 2; P. p. 7 #7); Leonard Sharrow & Anthony Checchia bassoons); Julius Baker (flute); Harry Shulman (oboe); Max Goberman & Fred Manzella (violins); Jean Schneider (cello); Eugenia Earle (harpsichord); New York Sinfonietta conducted by Max Goberman. Library of Recorded Masterpieces Vol. 1, No. 7, monophonic or stereo, \$8.50; by subscription only.

OF the four works in this seventh volume of the Library of Recorded Masterpieces' Vivaldi series, both the chromatically conceived *Concerto in D minor* and the cheerful *Concerto in D* are absolute gems and rank with the very best of the composer's output. The performances are in almost all cases respectable, although stylistic techniques of the period have been ignored. Thus, the second movement of tomo 154, for one example, contains only those trills given in the score—no additional ornamentation nor, for that matter, any embellishment of the melody in the repeats. Leonard Sharrow's execution of the *Bassoon Concerto* is, with the same reservations, technically excellent, but the *Sonata for Two Violins* is tonally raucous. The sound in stereo, albeit a bit shrill, is well managed, and the album includes the full scores and extensive notes. —I.K.

**WAGNER:** *Overtures to "Rienzi" and "The Flying Dutchman"; "Die Walküre"—Wotan's Farewell and Magic Fire Music; "Die Meistersinger"—Prelude to Act III, Dance of the Apprentices, Procession of the Mastersingers;* Detroit Symphony Orchestra conducted by Paul Paray. Mercury Stereo SR-90232, \$5.98.

THE most impressively led work in this collection is the "*Rienzi*" Overture, which Paray allows to unfold unhurriedly and with a jaunty exuberance. The

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"Dutchman" overture is too rushed and miniature in scale to give any suggestion of the subject of the piece and of the opera which it precedes. The "*Meistersinger*" excerpts are pleasingly projected, with a tender third-act prelude and a delightful dance; the "procession", however, lacks the final note of pompousness which allows us to visualize the stately march of the Mastersingers in full regalia. As concerns the "*Walküre*" business, let me state immediately that I am not an admirer of opera without words, particularly a "*Walküre*" finale without a Wotan. The music is meaningless without the words, and the senselessness of the perpetuation of such castrated opera is pointed up by the liner notes, wherein the writer must of necessity describe to us the situation represented by the music without ever mentioning that we are to hear it minus its dramatic protagonist. Perhaps this doesn't really matter, for only such a Wotan as Hotter could have obscured this conductor's failure to make the broad, soaringly magnificent lines of the music emerge. The orchestral playing is brilliant throughout, and if you wish to display the boom and bang of which your stereo outfit is capable, this record is recommended as a first-class dazzler.

—H.G.

•  
**WEBER:** "*Der Freischütz*"; Irngard Seefried (Agathe), Rita Streich (Annenchen), Richard Holm (Max), Paul Kuen (Kilian), Eberhard Wächter (Ottokar), Albrecht Peter (Kuno), Walter Kreppel (Hermit), Kurt Böhm (Caspar), Ernst Ginsberg (Samiel); Chorus and Orchestra of the Bavarian Radio conducted by Eugen Jochum. Deutsche Grammophon set DGG 18639/40, four sides, \$11.96, or Stereo DGG 138639/40, \$13.96.

⑧NOW that two excellently produced stereo versions of "*Freischütz*" are on the market, I am free to wonder again at the

fact that this opera has been relegated to the position of a historical relic; the opera's influence on the course of 19th-century music is unquestioned, but its frequency of mention in the history books has not had the effect of making it a "popular", often-revived work. "*Der Freischütz*" deserves hearing after hearing, for it is as perfect an example of musical theater at its most consistently inspired as can be found. Often as I have heard the opera—usually on records—I have not been able to find a moment where my delight and attention sag. The dramatic situations of this quasi-folk tale are simple, perhaps even puerile, with the characters easily classifiable as black and white; Weber, however, sets it with such dramatic skill, with such consistent musical inventiveness, that, in a first-rate performance, it can become gripping drama. Fortunately this DGG release, received rather tardily for review, supplies all the interpretative qualities necessary to illumine the tremendous felicities of the work.

The opera's most demanding and impressive role, Caspar, is handled with something like dramatic genius by Kurt Böhm. Caspar is generally described as a prototype of the folk-tale villain. This description hardly does justice to what the part can be when taken by the likes of Böhm. This Caspar is, to be sure, cruel, but Böhm projects all the other facets of the character which relate him to the kind of person all of us might conceivably know and dislike intensely for qualities other than pure "evil". This Caspar is, in addition, a coward, a braggart, an inveterate I-told-you-so; he is also petulant, sneaky, and revoltingly obstreperous. The fact that he is capable of a form of murder is secondary. It is impossible to feel detached about this character as interpreted by Böhm. If you fail to dislike him heartily and feel a bit uncomfortable in his presence, you

are missing the point of his magnificent characterization and perhaps of the opera itself. Evidently such dramatic cunning would be worthless without the most impressive vocal skill; and this too is possessed by Böhme, as most record collectors must know by this time. Richard Holm's Max is enough of a bumpkin to be tempted by this boisterous, offensive Caspar, and he too, in spite of a rather light voice for the part (a Lohengrin rather than a David tenor is what is called for) is excellent. The voice has the whiteness of a "second tenor" in the upper register; but it is well handled and Holm acts with appropriate simplicity and obvious intelligence. The remaining men's roles are comparatively unimportant, and all well projected here. Seefried is a fine Agathe, with the natural beauty of her voice emerging with greater impact that it generally has of late. Streich's fluttery Annchen is pure sugarcandy charm, and captivatingly pure in production.

Jochum is once more magnificent, as are his orchestra and chorus. The conducting is exciting, without being frenetic; romantic, without being slushy. Jochum keeps the action moving at all times. The famous "Wolf's Glen" scene is particularly thrilling, with Böhme of course supplying the greatest pleasure; and the chorus reaching rare heights of strength and eerie splendor. This scene is unquestionably one of the great *tour de force* of opera and DGG's artists and engineers have left no possibilities of making it all it should be untouched. The stereo gimmicks employed are tremendously impressive, as is the over-all sound of the set. DGG has wisely streamlined the spoken dialogue to the barest minimum. The set is accompanied by a handsomely produced booklet containing intelligent notes and a laudable translation (with the original) of the German text.

The recently-released Electrola set could never be considered a second-rate performance; but it cannot match the total achievement of the DGG, with the most marked disparity being between the inspired Caspar of DGG's Böhme and the rather ordinary one of Electrola's Karl Kohn. —H.G.

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By HENRIETTA YURCHENCO

**Bill McAdoo Sings.** Folkways FA-2448, \$5.95.

▲SOME years ago at a summer camp, I had the opportunity to hear one of the counselors sing at an evening of amateur music-making. His was a very pleasant voice and in the context of that evening it stood out. This same singer, Bill McAdoo, has developed and matured and now has the makings of a great artist. His voice is deep-toned and rich and he is learning to modulate its dynamics and tone colors. Sometimes it rings out, expressing the fervent hope of a better future, as in *I'm Gonna Walk And Talk For My Freedom*. Sometimes it is gravelly and guttural, giving vent to the anger of *I Don't Want No Jim Crow Coffee*. But it can also bring out the tenderness of

*Fare Thee Well*. His wide experience in life as a university student and in all types of jobs equips him to be as natural in an Elizabethan ballad as in the colloquial of the blues, for these songs do cover that range. He has written the text in adaptations of several songs and in some cases has composed the tunes, too. He deals for the most part with topical issues that are deeply felt by the singer: the Montgomery bus boycott, Caryl Chessman, the atom bomb. But there are also those more personal moods of love songs and blues as well as traditional spirituals and ballads. His guitar playing is simple but appropriate to his selections, and has the able assistance of the banjo of Pete Seeger. In Bill McAdoo we have great expectations. —H.H.

## From Poland, the captivating Mazowsze

**Mazowsze.** The Polish Song and Dance Company. Vol. 1 and 2. Monitor MF-360 and MF-361, \$4.98 each.

▲IN 1949 the late Tadeusz Sygietyński, a leading composer and authority on Polish folk music, assembled a hundred young people from the Mazowsze province at a country house twenty miles out of Warsaw and there shaped them into a disciplined choral and dance ensemble. Since then they have traveled all over the world, captivating audiences with their considerable talents. United States audiences will see them for the first time this fall when they make a coast-to-coast tour.

If the group sounds as light-hearted and innocently gay onstage as they do on

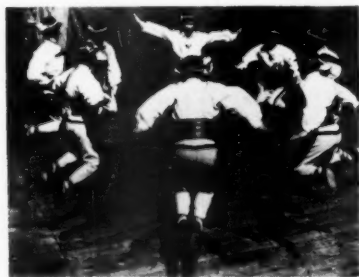
these two discs, then success is assured. The songs, divided equally between old and new (mostly composed by the company's late conductor), show their German and Slavic roots. The arrangements are simpler and less consciously artful than the Silesian ensemble (*Slonsk*) released previously on records. The occasional unison and solo singing fall ever so pleasantly on the ear. The collection abounds in bouncy *obereks*, *krakowiaks*, waltzes and *mazurkas*. Particularly notable is the *Oberek Opoczyński* on MF-360, and a medley of tunes from Wielkopolska, sung to string and bagpipe accompaniment. *Little Wild Duck*, *The Valley*, *The Little Candle*, all on MF-361, are ingratiatingly good-natured.

A separate folder has English translations and the Polish texts. Socialism or not, the Poles still concentrate on the thorny subject of love. —H.Y.

Mazowsze singers and, below right, dancers



Henrietta Yurchenco is the chief folk music critic. Paul Kresh and Herbert Haufrecht are her principal associates.



**The Best of Robin Roberts.** Prestige/International INT-13017, \$4.98.

▲WHEN Miss Roberts performs the songs which suit her particular voice and emotional range, she is a delight to hear. Only when she forces her voice or sings with a strong beat, as in *One Sunday Morning*, an Irish song, or in *Old Kimball*, an American Irish-Negro song, is the result strained and out of character. Fortunately, the rest of this album shows her off to good advantage. There is youthful urgency and sweet pathos in her voice. Her research in the British Isles has brought her into close contact with traditional singers. Her singing shows how deeply their influence penetrated, for she does remarkably well with the trills and embellishments, the intonation, and the free rhythmic pattern of British melodies. These qualities are particularly noteworthy in two unaccompanied songs, the *Lowlands of Holland* and the haunting *Molly Bawn*.

The selection is rich in music and poetry. —H.Y.

Country Blues. *Lightnin'* Hopkins. Tradition TLP-1035, \$4.98.

**Autobiography In Blues.** *Lightnin'* Hopkins. Tradition TLP-1040, \$4.98.

▲WHILE casually listening to a batch of "pop" discs some years ago, I found one that I believe was called "Midnight Blues" which was sung by *Lightnin'* Hopkins. It was so distinctive and exciting that I can truthfully say I was struck by *Lightnin'*. Since then, he has become popular among folksong enthusiasts. These two records include the many types of blues: slow, fast, boogie beat, walking bass, blues with breaks, vocal and instrumental. And Hopkins has the versatility and technique to encompass the wide range. "Country Blues" contains some standards like *Long Gone*, *See See Rider (Easy Rider)*, and *Go Down Old Hannah*. On some blues, Luke Miles assists *Lightnin'* with his twelve-string guitar and voice. The sound is resonant. —H.H.

Those Prison Blues. Robert Pete Williams. Folk Lyric FL-109, \$4.98.

▲THE title derives from the fact that this self-taught performer is serving a long-term prison sentence. In Czarist Siberia prison was called the "university" for the revolutionists. In this country it seems to be the "conservatory" for blues singers, whose most illustrious graduate was Huddie Ledbetter. Mr. Williams plays and sings in a less sophisticated, less commercial style than *Lightnin'* Hopkins and this is both an asset and a liability. In its positive aspects, there are less melodic and harmonic clichés. The chords often



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do not fit the standard blues pattern; they are not "correct". But they gain greater freedom and strength in this more primitive style. The melodic phrases are more improvised and are sometimes modal, as in *Louise*. Here the vocalization of the diphthong of the title and the ostinato figure in the bass make this an unusual blues. The indistinct diction is the one negative feature of this record. For this reason, the inclusion of a more nearly complete text of the songs on the jacket would have been helpful. —H.H.

•  
**Lado.** The Croatian Song and Dance Ensemble. Monitor MF-344, \$4.98.

**Music of Yugoslavia.** The Dalmatian Singers conducted by Peter Tralich. Monitor MF-349, \$4.98.

**Branko Krsmanovic Chorus of Yugoslavia at Carnegie Hall.** The Mixed Chorus of Eighty Voices conducted by Bogdan Babich. Monitor MP-576, \$4.98.

▲JUST a glance at the map of Europe will show that Yugoslavia is in a strategic position, culturally speaking. On the west Italy is her neighbor, to the north Austria and Hungary, with Rumania and Bulgaria on the east and Albania and Greece in the south. The influence of these national and ethnic cultures is amply demonstrated in the rich and vari-colored mosaic of Yugoslav folk music. The folk ensembles listed cover only Croatia and Dalmatia. The Branko Krsmanovic Chorus, a well-disciplined university choir from Belgrade, does a smattering of folk songs from other regions.

By far the most interesting from the folk music point of view is the Croatian ensemble. Lacking the dubious virtue of concert training, the voices are fresh and strong, and full of natural enthusiasm. Their strident, steady-toned singing is in keeping with the tradition of the Balkan peasants. Although the group has an unsophisticated sound it is extremely proficient, performing the often complex arrangements with skill and confidence.

The folk song arrangers, Emil Cossetto, Bozo Potocnik, and Professor Zvonko Ljevakovic, the director of the group who also serves as choreographer, have done admirable harmonizations based on traditional Balkan folk polyphony. Bulgaria, Rumania, and Albania (and even Italy, where Albanian and Yugoslav refugees fled during the onerous Turkish occupation) abound in examples of this rare and unusual treatment. They also use to good advantage the primitive Orthodox harmony preserved to this day by Eastern European peasantry, (notably Georgia in the USSR). The sections harmonized with series of open fifths have an arresting

piquancy. The arrangers have the good taste and sense to know how to hold the listener's continuous attention. They add interest by the use of frequent instrumental interludes, solo passages, a *cappella* singing and the sound of dancing feet.

This is quite a contrast to the pop-oriented treatment inflicted on our own folk music, i.e., excessive key modulations, "angel's choruses" à la Hollywood, etc.

The Croatian *Tri Jetrce Zito Zele* (Three Sisters-in-law Long for Corn) and *Vrlicko Kolo* from inland Dalmatia are distinguished melodies. The latter has an elegiac, chromatic melody which sets the mood for a song of heroism. It is performed without instruments, the rhythm tapped out by the dancers' feet. Also of interest is *Lindjo a kolo* (round dance) from the southern Adriatic, played on an ancient three-stringed lyre, called *ljericja*. The caller's dramatic intoned instructions, and the strange sound of the lyre, combine to evoke a remote past.

The Dalmatian record differs from the Croatian in every possible way. These soft, melodious tunes from the small ancient coastal towns and islands have the sentimentality and languor of neighboring Italy. Like seamen's songs everywhere, they deal with the sailors' longing for the girls they left behind. The performers are astute professional entertainers who could easily grace any sophisticated dining place.

Their instrumental style on mandolin, accordion, and guitar is jaunty and good-natured and, when imbued with generous amounts of *slivovitz*, most disarming.

The Branko Krsmanovich Chorus, under the exacting and imaginative direction of Bogdan Babich, presents both folk and art music. This well-trained chorus made a successful appearance last fall at Carnegie Hall as part of a national tour. Their singing may be compared to a fine etching in which every dot and line, every shading and decorative element is clearly set in relief. The ensemble is meticulously accurate at any speed—occasionally breathtaking, but feeling and musicality are never sacrificed on the altar of perfection. There is a stunning performance of excerpts from Carl Orff's *Catulli Carmina*: two "*Villote del Fiore*" (medieval Flower Dances, songs which frankly praise the physical aspects of love) by the 16th-century Fillippo Azzaiolo, and an ecstatic religious song by a 20th-century Yugoslav composer, Marko Tajevich. The rest of the disc is divided among Yugoslav, Russian and (!) American folk songs. The creole *Salangadou*, in an arrangement by Tom Scott, is creditably sung by a talented young soprano. Translations are given in full. (An earlier disc—MP-575—is devoted to popular folk and folk-like songs.)

—H.Y.

# SOUND IDEAS

An Equipment Review

By LARRY ZIDE



Fairchild Compressor

**M**USIC, when recorded, must be restricted in dynamics for a variety of reasons. A large symphony orchestra produces a tremendous ratio of soft to loud sounds. Were this to be recorded without controls it would either overload the original tape during the loud portions, causing distortion, or be lost in the tape hiss during the quietest passages. In the transfer to disc this problem becomes all the more acute. If the loudest music were left unchecked here, there would be severe overcutting from groove to groove; or, if the level of recording were to be set for the highest volumes, the over-all level of the disc would be such that record hiss and noise would be extremely annoying most of the time.

For these reasons, and there are others as well, most commercial discs and tapes, as well as all live broadcasts, are carefully monitored to control the recorded dynamics. This "gain-riding", as the engineers call it, is imposed at several steps. It is done first at the original recording, usually manually. Secondly, it is automatically modulated when the master tape is transferred to disc. If the recording is of wide dynamic content it may be further controlled when the disc is broadcast so that the solo instruments will not be "down in the mud".

Musical dynamics are a vital part of the full enjoyment of live music. Re-

stricted dynamics in recording are one reason why even the best possible equipment lacks a certain element of realism. There have been earlier devices that attempted to restore the stolen power of music but, to the best of my knowledge, the Fairchild Compressor is the first one to attack the problem successfully.

I can state quite firmly that the Compressor works magnificently. The full effect of even partially restored power must be heard to be completely appreciated.

The device works by sensing the outputs of the amplifier and feeding this information back to the inputs. Thus, a low-level section is not affected at all, while a loud part, felt at the outputs, "tell" the Compressor to raise the volume of the signal coming through. Since electronics are almost instantaneous there is, for the most part, no awareness of the action of the unit. There is one slight rub, however. The Compressor can't think. At times it will take hold of a passage that is supposed to be *slightly* louder and raise it out of proportion. For this reason the unit has two controls for the expansion effect, one for each channel, on the front panel. These should be carefully adjusted for the program material at hand.

A more difficult problem, caused by the fact that most music reproduction is from discs, is the deliberately built-in time delay. If the Compressor's actions were

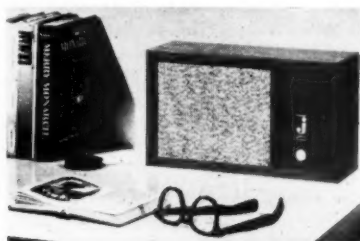
instantaneous, every click and pop would seem to be an explosion. And so, Fairchild's engineers have designed the unit to wait a split-instant before automatically jumping in. With certain staccato effects this time delay can be noticed. For the most part, because the delay is extremely short, it is simply not noticed.

The Fairchild Comander is without tubes and draws no power of consequence. A small amount of amplifier output is used to light the indicator lamps that prove the unit is functioning, but this should not affect even the lowest efficiency speakers at all. As mentioned earlier, the unit is connected to the output of the stereo amplifier for its sensing voltage. Actual installation of the device can be accomplished at several points in a system. The best place is between the preamp and power amplifier if this is possible. If not, the Comander should be plugged into the phono inputs and the cartridge output connected to the Comander. In other words, the unit can be connected between any basic component

and its controls, so long as it is also connected to the amplifier outputs.

An interesting side use of the Comander is for deliberate compression. If radio or records are to be used for background effect at lower listening levels, it is a definite asset to be able to compress loud parts so that the background is at a more even level. Otherwise, if the volume is set for the louder music quiet passages are not heard. Conversely, setting for lowest level audibility makes the higher volumes obtrusive. The same switch that changes the unit from compression to expansion also has an "off" position that removes the unit from the circuit entirely. It is interesting to note that the Comander does not seem to add any distortion or other effect to reproduction. It will not in any way degrade the finest equipment.

In conclusion, I can state that having lived with a Comander now for a couple of months I could not possibly go back to listening to music *without* it in my system. I am tempted to say that everyone should run out and buy one. (Price, \$75.)



**Jensen X-10 Compact Speaker System**

**T**HERE has long been a need, at least to my thinking, for a decent-sounding, really compact speaker system for use as extension units. Jensen has recently introduced its X-10 two-way system, which goes a long way toward satisfying that need. Into an enclosure measuring only  $7\frac{1}{4}$ " x 13" x  $4\frac{5}{8}$ " Jensen has placed a new six-inch high-compliance woofer and a three-inch tweeter. To complete the usefulness of the package as a remote speaker, Jensen has put a volume control on the front panel.

It is something of a surprise to hear the size of the sound that comes out of these tiny boxes. Good, usable bass is present to about 55-60 cycles. The top end is correspondingly good to around 15,000 cycles. But physical frequency response is not the only important quality of a good speaker. The Jensen X-10 is fairly clean-sounding. To be sure, it can't hold a candle to a full-sized system, but that doesn't mean that it fails to perform as it was intended to perform. As a secondary speaker of modest cost, the X-10 is most excellent. At



\$29.75 each, these speakers simply have no competition at anywhere near their price.

One particularly sensible use for the X-10 would be in small kitchen or bedroom FM radio listening systems. With a component such as Harman-Kardon's FA-10 FM tuner and 10 watt amplifier,

or a similar unit coming soon from PACO, and X-10 makes a compact two-piece system that, I suspect, will far outperform any of the table model FM radios available. In any case, Jensen ought to sell a lot of these speakers. They're easy to listen to and they do the job as the advertising copy claims.

### Koss SP-3 Stereophones

**T**HE MANY advantages of quality earphones, wired for stereo use or otherwise, are almost too numerous to list. It is therefore strange that, until fairly recently, there has simply been nothing on the market to satisfy the home user. Heretofore, phones were made for use with tape recorder monitor outputs and the like, but nothing for the low impedances of amplifier outputs. The Koss SP-3 Stereophones (\$24.75) are designed to fill this vacuum.

Each earphone actually contains a miniature speaker. These are individually wired to a three-contact phone jack. A common ground is used. A female jack (provided) is wired directly to the stereo speaker connections of a power amplifier using the four-ohm taps. Then you can sit back and enjoy your favorite stereo performances.

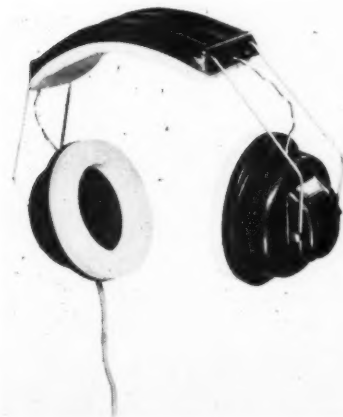
The experience of stereo by earphones

is quite impossible to describe on paper. Anyone who has worn conventional phones knows that the sound seems to emanate from a central cranium position. Stereo spreads an intra-head stage from ear to ear. The effect can be quite overwhelming. But there is something disconcerting about a stage that turns when you turn. The one lack of realism of earphones is the constant perspective, no matter how you move your head.

There is an oft-stated complaint that earphones provide no bass. True, I have yet to hear a good twenty cycles on phones, but then there are few enough speakers of any size that will do this. The point is that the Koss phones at least *do* have good bass down to about fifty cycles. Over-all sound is smooth but with some roughness on the top end. There is no question in my mind but that these Koss stereophones are entitled to the much abused adjective: high-fidelity.

As an accessory, Koss offers several junction boxes. The most useful is the T-5 (\$7.95). This allows the user to switch speakers on and off while up to two sets of stereophones are plugged in. The T-5 box also contains two volume controls, one for each ear. Since the phones are of low impedance they cannot be used directly into a tape recorder. For this purpose there is the T-1 box, a dual transformer, for proper impedance matching. Several other accessories, including a complete stereophone player, are in the Koss catalogue.

All in all, I'm quite satisfied by these Koss units. They provide a fine way to have your thunder and neighbors at the same time.



# BOOK REVIEWS

**GROVE'S DICTIONARY OF MUSIC AND MUSICIANS, VOL. X: Supplementary Volume to the Fifth Edition**, edited by Eric Blom, with Denis Stevens, Associate Editor. St. Martin's Press, New York, 1961, xxxii, 493 pp., \$15.

THE TITLE of this volume is not very well chosen. As it stands it implies that this is a semi-self-contained volume, comprising articles which add new or up-to-date material. But in reality it is more and less than that, and might more correctly have been entitled *Addenda et corrigenda*. In his Preface Blom himself suggests the following rough proportion of the categories which the volume offers:

1. Corrections—one quarter.
2. Additions to existing articles—one quarter.
3. New entries of persons or subjects previously omitted—one quarter.
4. New discoveries—one quarter.

Each new entry is listed under the page of the Fifth Edition volume into which it should fit, making this volume about as un-independent as could be imagined. Thus it does not really *supplement* the full set at all: it simply extends it a bit further in the same fashion. Its perspectives remain the same. Under the circumstances the price might seem unduly high. For that matter, the private owner of the Fifth Edition might wonder if it is worth having at all, since it simply adds a second location in which one must check, in addition to the main entries. Blom realizes this handicap, and goes so far as to suggest what may occur to many people anyway by themselves. That is, to go through the nine volumes of the full set systematically marking each place where material should be inserted from the Supplement, perhaps even entering the very small changes themselves. Since I try to keep my set up-to-date on my own, this idea had occurred to me, and, urged on the more by Blom's advice, I have begun this task myself. I can report

that it is a hideously slow and laborious chore, which will probably take ages. But for anyone who uses his Grove with any regularity this is a good idea, for all the toil involved. In spite of its British provincialism, and some grave shortcomings of coverage, the present edition of Grove is still the basic reference tool on music in the English language. As such, it deserves to be kept up by its possessors and users. Blom's death, short of his 71st birthday, on April 11, 1959, came in the midst of preparing this Supplement. The work was completed by Denis Stevens, and an article on Blom was added as a glowing tribute to the departed Editor. Stevens has apparently carried out his assignment well. But one wonders who is responsible for the curious fact that the contents of one half-page, p. 251, are reproduced neatly on the extra space of another half-page, p. 317. P. 251 is also where it should be, so no one loses anything, but it does seem a rather strange duplication, quite out of place in view of both the volume's correcting intentions and its otherwise precise execution.

—J.W.B.

**Alessandro Scarlatti, His Life and Work**, by Edward J. Dent, with Preface and Additional Notes by Frank Walker, xii, 252pp. St. Martin's Press, \$6.75.

IN a scholarly subject such as musicology, when new research and theories are always coming forth, there are few monographs which can pass the tests of half a century and remain still vivid and fundamental. But one of the few is this book. First published in 1905, it has long been a classic—a classic in the sense both of its basic indispensability to the student of this composer, and of its inimitable liveliness, clarity, and perception. Unfortunately, also, it has long been out of print, and a much-sought-after item in bookstalls. Thanks to the benefits of enterprise and photographic reproduction

it has been made readily available once more.

Inevitably, some revisions are in order to keep pace with the result of subsequent research. But little is involved except small details, and these are intelligently handled in the form of supplementary notes by Mr. Walker appended at the end of the book, and indicated in the text by marginal asterisks. The genealogical table of the Scarlatti family which Dent originally included has been omitted in this reprint in deference to the more up-to-date table in Kirkpatrick's *Domenico Scarlatti* (which itself, I understand, is soon to appear in a revised edition). Otherwise, the text stands untouched.

Unfortunately, Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725), for all his great importance in music history, still remains essentially a "textbook composer", one of whom we read much but hear little, especially in live performances. Hence Dent's book continues to be primarily a survey of music that has no living meaning or familiarity to most readers. Herein lies both its value and its possible remoteness. Dent gives what little information was available to him on the man and his life, and whatever is relevant in the background of his time. But inevitably the bulk of the study is devoted to discussion of the composer's music—its development,

stylistic features, and interest. As the outstanding figure of the Neapolitan School, Scarlatti was primarily a composer of opera and vocal music, and it is to this that Dent devotes most attention. Though he does not ignore the remainder of Scarlatti's lesser output, it is unfortunate that Dent did not devote more discussion to the instrumental music. Scarlatti's keyboard works are not all so dull as Dent suggests, nor his chamber works so trivial, and as an early composer of mature orchestral music he deserves further consideration.

One of the most important features of this book is a thorough listing of Scarlatti's works. Though the instrumental compositions are, again, given short shrift, the lists of operas and especially of cantatas and vocal works are indispensable, especially since they have been brought up to date by Walker with appended tables of newly-discovered works to be added to the original author's researches. Aside from a frontispiece portrait of the composer there are no illustrations, but there are numerous musical quotations which are a vital part of the analyses.

With Walker's additions, Dent's study is given all the sprucing up it needs. It is a book of great importance, and its restoration to circulation deserves praise and support.

—J.W.B.

## *Other books received for review*

A TO Z IN AUDIO, by G. A. Briggs; assisted by R. E. Cooke. Gernsback Library; paperback, \$3.20; hard cover, \$3.75.

LIFE AND LISZT: The Recollections of a Concert Pianist, by Arthur Friedheim; edited by Theodore L. Bullock. Taplinger, \$6.

MODERN MUSIC NOTATION: A Reference and Textbook, by Laszlo Boehm. G. Schirmer, \$2.50.

LISZT'S WEIMAR, by Morris Bagby; edited by Kathleen Hoover. Thomas Yoseloff, \$3.95.

THE OPERA COMPANION: A Guide for the Casual Operagoer, by George Martin. Dodd, Mead & Co., \$12.50.

THE STORY OF AMERICA'S MUSICAL THEATER, by David Ewen. Chilton, \$3.50.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF MUSIC IN AMERICA, edited by Paul Henry Lang (17 Schirmer Centennial articles, including "Music on Records—1877-1961" by Roland Gelatt). G. Schirmer, Inc.; distributed by Grosset & Dunlap, \$6.95.

BRAHMS: His Life and Work, by Karl Geiringer. Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged. Doubleday (Anchor Paperback A-248), \$1.45.

ONE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHT STANDS, by Ted Shawn, with Gray Poole. Doubleday, \$4.95.

# THE MONTH'S JAZZ

Martin Williams / Mail Edey / Don Heckman / Robert Levin

**Benny Goodman:** *Benny Goodman Swings Again.* Columbia CL-1579, \$3.98.

▲MORE music for the tired businessman. What better relaxation before dinner than to settle down with a nice Martini and listen to this peppy re-staging of the days when swing was the thing? For those who require jazz as a stimulant for tired blood, then, this recording will fill the bill. But for those who recall the fine Fletcher Henderson arrangements that started the whole thing, the endless process of watering-down will be a little too much to take. Goodman's noodling, technically exacting as it may be, is mostly right out of the exercise book (which may explain the tremendous appeal he still holds for high-school clarinet players). The group is a cut-down version of the Goodman big bands and, despite the raucous enthusiasm of the background noises, has little to offer. —D.H.

**Red Allen Plays King Oliver.** Verve V-1025, \$4.98.

▲ALLEN is not often given credit for being what I think he is: one of the very greatest trumpeters in jazz history and one of the *avant-garde* players of the thirties who did much to pave the way for the development of modern jazz. As early as 1929 he was playing solos which in linearity and rhythmic subtlety were ten years ahead of their time—which, in the headlong evolution of jazz, is quite a lot. Today he is usually brushed off by modernists who haven't listened as a "dixielander", which is as absurd as calling Charlie Parker a swing musician. Absurd, perhaps,

but understandable; many older players of whatever style and background have been forced into a show-biz dixieland context by the exigencies of making a living, and Allen is no exception. His current playing too often reflects that context and the tastes of its audience, but on occasion he seems to shuck these burdens off and plays with his old mastery and invention. At these moments he is the equal of almost any trumpeter in any style.

His own style is a descendant of Oliver's (as is that of anybody who was influenced by Louis Armstrong) and he did play with Oliver, beginning his recording career in a band with which Oliver was just about ending his. But Allen can be closer to Gillespie than to Oliver in many ways, and Oliver's name on this album is just a gimmick. Only one of these twelve tunes—*Canal Street Blues*—was composed by Oliver; I suspect several were not even ever played by him. They are warhorses of varied New Orleans, dixieland, and swing ancestry, vacantly performed by a huff and puff Metropole house group which verges on the incompetent. This isn't the sort of material Allen can do anything with; the stock patterns and surrounding players are painfully inhibiting. On *Snowy Morning Blues* he suggests some of the marvelous things he can do with rhythm; otherwise there is almost nothing here at all. —M.E.

**Paul Bryant: *Burnin'*.** Pacific Jazz PJ-12, \$4.98.

▲BRYANT is a West Coast organist. He plays all the funky licks, and very little else, but he does it with swinging re-

NOTE: A very useful series of mimeographed jazz discographies is currently being compiled by an industrious Dane named Jorgen Gruet Jepsen. So far published are Jelly Roll Morton (in two booklets), Duke Ellington (in three booklets), Louis Armstrong (in three booklets), Art Tatum and Bud Powell (in a single booklet), Lester Young, Billie Holiday, Count Basie, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Stan Kenton, Fats Navarro and Clifford Brown, Cannonball Adderley and John Coltrane, Thelonious Monk and

Sonny Rollins. Inevitably there are minor mistakes here and there, but there are few (and I feel cause to complain only about the error-ridden list of compositions included at the end of the early editions of the Morton, Monk, and Parker volumes). In the U. S. A., each booklet sells for \$1.25; they are available in the East from Walter C. Allen, P. O. Box 501, Stanhope, New Jersey, and in the West from Ernie Edwards, Jr., 718 South Keenan Avenue, Los Angeles 22, California.

—M.W.

laxation and without the more extreme sonic effects the organ tempts out of less tasteful players. It's all hip background music (emphasis on blues and quasi-gospel) except for some lovely brief solos by guitarist Jim Hall. Jimmy Bond and Jimmy Miller are on bass and drums.

—M.E.

•  
**Benny Bailey:** *Big Brass*. Candid 8011, \$4.98.

▲NEW trumpet players seem to be the thing lately. Practically every jazz label is advancing the cause of at least one bright young star of the future. Most are exceptional talents, and all have the shouting extroversionism that has characterized young trumpeters since the days of Buddy Bolden. But few are able at this stage of their development to encompass a complete dynamic range in their music.

When a jazz musician comes to public prominence well past the age of thirty, you can be sure he has had ample time to consider some of the more pertinent factors that led him to his choice of a career. It may be that Benny Bailey's long self-imposed exile in Europe has been a blessing in disguise. His music reflects the quiet confidence of one who has given careful thought to his artistic expression and who plays, not with wild abandon alone, but with an understanding balance of the elements of heart and mind.

This recording is strongly recommended; it is Bailey's first American date in a leadership capacity, and may be his last since a long clear look at the New York jazz scene was enough to propel him back to Sweden. His solo work is superb throughout the album. As a personal preference, I could easily have dispensed with the Quincy Jones arrangements, and even the additional horn players seem like unnecessary icing on an already well-decorated cake.

But the important thing is Bailey and the sheer beauty he creates. His solos are uniformly excellent—models of control in which the emotional peaks come only at the moment of greatest impact. It will be a genuine loss to jazz if Bailey's future recordings—even if they all originate in Sweden—are not made available to the American audience. At a time when it is often difficult to distinguish one "new" voice from another, here is one that deserves your careful attention. —D.H.

•  
**Erroll Garner:** *Dreamstreet*. ABC-Paramount ABC-365, \$3.98.

**Les McCann:** *Les McCann, Ltd.* In San Francisco. Pacific Jazz PJ-16, \$4.98.

▲THERE is more similarity here than meets the eye. Both pianists have developed highly personal styles; in the case of Garner, the style is predominantly

musical; with McCann it draws sustenance from extra-musical gospel generalizations. The Garner touch has not changed in years, and this recording is fairly typical of his recent work—retarded rhythmic passages, harmonic commonplaces, and a heavy dependence upon sequential melodic and rhythmic phrases. For the Garner fan this will be more grist for the mill, but for others it may prove to be wearing thin. McCann's discovery of the "truth" apparently doesn't include the development of a musical identity, and his reliance on titles (*Gone on and Get That Church; We'll See Yaw'll after While, Ya Hear?*) which will appeal to the emerging interest in Negro culture, are in questionable taste. Musically the album is identifiable only by its poor technical execution. Otherwise it would be indistinguishable from the deluge of piano trio records on the market.

—D.H.

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# Stereotape Reviews

Peter C. Pfunke / Robert Jones / C. J. Lulen



**BARTÓK:** *Concerto for Orchestra; Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*; L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande conducted by Ernest Ansermet. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, London (Twin-Pak) LCK-80068, \$11.95.

ANSERMET'S Bartók is cleanly and tautly played. There is a muscular, incisive drive to both these readings that makes for excitement. Needless to say, there is much of purely sonic interest in both these scores, and London's stereo serves magnificently in enhancing the interesting effects and sonorities. Highly recommended. —P.C.P.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Trio in D, Op. 9, No. 2*; **J. S. BACH:** *Sinfonias—No. 4 in D minor, No. 9 in F minor, No. 3 in D*; **SCHUBERT:** *Trio No. 2 in B flat*; Jascha Heifetz (violin), William Primrose (viola), Gregor Piatigorsky (cello). Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, RCA Victor FTC-2076, \$8.95.

EXCEPTIONALLY faithful recording and notable processing fully reveal some infrequently played music in performances which are always animated and often quite effective. The trio's tone in the youthful Beethoven opus is sometimes overly rough or wiry, and its intonation will never be accepted as a model. Heifetz, too, gives us a couple of swoopy phrases that repel. Nevertheless, there is much to enjoy in this presentation; and the music, particularly the Andante in 6/8 time and the Minuet, is engaging.

The Bach Sinfonias derive from the Three-Part Inventions; they are not arranged; the original texts are employed with the three voices in each number assigned to the appropriate stringed instru-

ment. To this taste, this sequence is a happy one. These numbers sound better here than they ever before have played on a keyboard instrument.

The Schubert Trio dates from 1817 and, although it is immature Schubert, it has its charming moments. It is played here with sparkle and ample tone. —C.J.L.

**MOZART:** *"Così Fan Tutte" (Highlights)*; Lisa della Casa; Christa Ludwig; Emmy Loose; Erich Kunz; Anton Dermota; Paul Schoeffler with the Vienna State Opera Chorus and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Karl Böhm; *"Die Zauberflöte" (Highlights)*; Wilma Lipp; Hilde Gueden; Walter Berry; Leopold Simonsau; August Jaresch; Kurt Boehme; Emmy Loose; Judith Hellwig; Christa Ludwig; Hilde Rössl-Maidan; Dorothea Siebert; Ruthilde Boesch; Eva Boerner; Joseph Costic; Ljubomir Pantscheff with the Vienna State Opera Chorus and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Karl Böhm. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, London (Twin-Pak) LOH-90012, \$12.95.

THIS is one of London's chock-full "Twin-Pak" tape releases: there's just a little less than one hour and forty minutes of music on this tape. The excerpts from both operas are considerable and the performances are quite delightful. Included are *Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja*; *March of the Priests*; *In diesen heil'gen Hallen*; and *Pa-pa-pa-papagena* from *"The Magic Flute"* and *Ah, guarda, sorella! Come scoglio*; *Una donna a quindici anni*; *Il core vi dono*; and *Tutti accusan le donne* from *"Così Fan Tutte"*. London's sound is all that could be desired. —P.C.P.

**Hallelujah!;** Brass of the Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra conducted by Alfred Newman. Four Track 7 $\frac{1}{2}$  ips. Stereo Tape, Capitol ZP-8529, \$7.98.

THERE'S a certain oppressiveness about these festivities. The arrangements (for brass, percussion, and organ) are a bit overpowering, to say the least. There's just too much of the Hollywood spectacle to suit my taste, though the stereo sound is, to be sure, marvelous. Included are *Hallelujah* from *Messiah*; *The Bells of St. Mary's*; *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*; *Little David, Play on Your Harp*; *Deck the Hall*; *The Lord's Prayer*; and *Chorale* from *Finlandia*. —P.C.P.

**Americana;** Capitol Symphony Orchestra conducted by Carmen Dragon. Four Track 7 $\frac{1}{2}$  ips. Stereo Tape, Capitol ZP-8523, \$7.98.

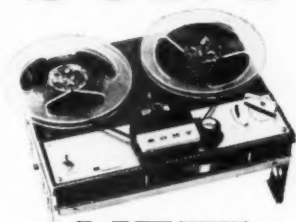
AS always, Carmen Dragon's arrangements and conducting are in excellent taste. The polished, high spirited playing aids this easy-to-listen-to album of typical pops fare. Included are *Dixie*; *Hoe Down*; *Pavanne* (from Gould's American Symphonette No. 2); *Battle Hymn of the Republic*; *Aura Lee*; and *On the Trail* (from Grofé's *Grand Canyon Suite*). Capitol's sound leaves nothing to be desired. —P.C.P.

**Charge!;** Felix Slatkin conducting the Percussion Brigade. Four Track 7 $\frac{1}{2}$  ips. Stereo Tape, Capitol ZT-1270, \$6.98.

THERE'S a lease-breaker to end all lease-breakers. This one gets so bad that my cat, Henry, who is usually quite docile in the face of even the most awesome of sonic onslaughts, was prancing around in circles with glassy eyes and arched back (I think he doesn't get along with tiles!). With all this noise, though, goes some mighty impressive engineering. The sound is not at all strained, the stereo is sharply in focus, and the transients are superb. Included are miscellaneous arrangements for brass, percussion, bagpipes, *et al.*, of various marching tunes and bugle calls. Ear-splitting, but kind of fun. —P.C.P.

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**The Sound of Stokowski and Wagner:**

"Tannhäuser"—Overture and *Venusberg Music*; "Die Walküre"—Ride of the Valkyries; "Tristan und Isolde"—Prelude to Act III; "Das Rheingold"—Entrance of the Gods Into Valhalla; Symphony of the Air conducted by Leopold Stokowski; Chorus directed by Margaret Hillis. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, RCA Victor FTC-2071, \$8.95.

STOKOWSKI'S Wagner is a luscious, sumptuous affair, though the "Walküre" and "Rheingold" excerpts are done with far less fervor and intensity than I would have wished for. The "Entrance of the Gods" here is no match for the electric version found in London's complete "Rheingold" recording. By far the most effective is the rich and lush performance of the Prelude to Act III of "Tristan". Victor's sound is superb throughout.

—P.C.P.

**Sounds of the Great Bands;** Glen

Gray and the Casa Loma Orchestra. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Capitol ZW-1022, \$7.98.

WHILE Glen Gray's "Sounds of the Great Bands" series makes thoroughly enjoyable listening, they cannot be termed successful as tributes to the great bands represented. To be a successful tribute, a performance must measure up to the original in general quality. Gray has chosen the most difficult method of paying tribute: almost direct imitation. Of course, it doesn't come off. How could it? His soloists are not of the caliber of the originals and frequently sound merely uncomfortable in their stylistic straitjackets. In addition, the microphoning frequently places the soloists in the background where they would never be placed in real life, thus further lessening their effectiveness. The sound is good, if nothing unusual, and the processing is very clean. To collectors who already possess the original 78s, Glen Gray's "tributes" will prove unnecessary, but for those who desire a compromise between the great performances of the past and the technical achievements of the present, this release will fill a need.

—R.J.

**The Soviet Army Chorus in Paris:** The

Alexandrov Song and Dance Ensemble; *The Marseillaise*; *Soldier's March*; *Song of a Troubled Youth*; *The Partisan's Anthem*; *Doobeennooshka*; *A Soldier's Song*; *You're Always Lovely*; *Meadowlands*; **VERDI:** *Chorus from "Ernani"*; *Russia, My Native Land*; *Soldier-Boy*; *Sing*; *Soviet National Anthem*. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Artia ASTA-502, \$7.95.

THE rousing virile singing of the Soviet Army Chorus needs no introduction at this late date. They are in their usual exuberant form here. It would seem, however, that Artia missed a good bet by using a studio session instead of a live one. Such performances cry out for the audience release of applause and shouting. The only indication of a Parisian performance is in the cover art, the title, and the inclusion of *La Marseillaise*. Artia's sound is first-rate, the stereo effect modest but tasteful (perhaps too much so for the material), the tape processing unexceptional.

—R.J.

**Stereo Action Goes Broadway;** Dick

Schory's Percussion and Brass Ensemble. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, RCA Victor FTP-1087, \$7.95.

**Stereo Action Goes Hollywood;** Marty

Gold and His Orchestra. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, RCA Victor FTP-1088, \$7.95.

STEREO Action, touted as "the sound your eyes can follow", will be much in evidence, I'm sure, at the audio shows. It's just the gimmicked-up, showy, zany stuff the manufacturers seem to insist on using at such affairs. Undeniably the sound is spectacular, with myriad super-directional stereo effects. Musically, the proceedings are pretty trashy: slick "stereo-ized" arrangements of various Broadway and Hollywood movie tunes. Included in the former are "Heat Wave", "Seventy-Six Trombones", "Camelot", and "The Sound of Music", and in the latter "Around the World", "The Children's Marching Song", "Gigi", "The High and the Mighty", and "Tara's Theme".

—P.C.P.



# WORDS ONLY

By PAUL KRESH

*Continuing a two-part consideration of recent comedy records from this country and England*

**Ain't That Weird?** Brother Dave Gardner. LPM-2335, \$3.98, or Stereo LSP-2335, \$4.98.

⑧IN our April issue, Donald Phelps referred to this gentleman as a "hip Elmer Gantry". The characterization still holds. Brother Gardner's endless, drawing dissertation delivered in the most cloying of styles—he calls his audience "beloved"—is obviously calculated to coddle country animosities toward everything urban. As he proceeds to exploit this conditioning (the audience at hand is solid Texas) one begins more and more to suspect that the gentleman is somewhat disingenuous, and not altogether wholesome. He's the type that ends up running for something.

•  
**Sounds Funny.** *Written and performed by Earle Doud.* Epic Stereo BN-598, \$4.98.

⑧THIS is a collection of 21 blackouts, or whatever you'd call the equivalent in sound, depending mainly for their tags on stereo effects as huge Martinis slide across gigantic bartops from one speaker to another, elephants dive splashing into swimming pools, trains and cars charge through your living room, and the like. Diverting at first, and a perfect demonstration record to show off equipment, but the novelty wears off rather soon.

•  
**The Explosive Sounds of Jackson Paine (Humor In Its Newest Form).** Warner Bros. W-1411, \$3.98.

▲ANOTHER series of blackouts, this time without stereo, involving trains running over girls tied to railroad tracks, an orator "struck dead" in the midst of a political speech, a bootblack giving advice to a customer on stock purchases, a birthday party for "Donna", which turns out to be the hurricane and blows out the candles, a man in love with the time signal operator, demolition of something planted by a "mad bomber" which turns out to be a music box, sounds of electric razors, cash registers, babies burping...enough?

Mr. Paine is said to perform these items in public with a drawing board (he's a commercial artist) which may or may not improve matters. The laughter, of the shriekier sort, sounds suspiciously dubbed in.

•  
**Elsa Lanchester Herself.** Verve V-15024, \$4.98.

▲AS one who used to sit transfixed in his straw seat at the old Turnabout Theater in Los Angeles, hopelessly under the spell of this woman as she sang "When a Lady Has a Piazza" or the ballad about the Irish girl who converted the sultan to monogamy, I confess it would probably be impossible to issue a record by Elsa Lanchester which would displease me. In this one, a rather carelessly recorded track of one of her "one-woman" shows at the 41st St. Theatre in New York, she sings some of the old songs with mad fervor, turns into a succession of characters attempting in various fluttery ways to keep their virtues tidy, recounts an alleged adventure as a dancing student under Isadora Duncan, drops a few names of London days of yore, moves about the stage selling lavender and, as well as a mere phonograph record can convey the idea, is her own mad, mildewed, incomparable self. Can you imagine any other comedienne with the cheek to woo—and win—a Broadway audience with recitations of poems by Osbert Sitwell and Harold Munro? The magic of Miss Lanchester is accountable in part by her ability to transform herself, popeyes, voice, posture and all, into any of the ladies she sings about, from careless little Lola ("somebody broke Lola's saucerpan") to the Western lady who was available from a mail-order catalogue. The rest is magic, sheer and inexplicable. The purchaser, of course, should have seen this performer (and I don't mean as Ariel in *The Tempest*) at least once before trying to appreciate her by ear alone, for the record is most to be valued as a

pleasant souvenir for all who, like myself, have ever gaped with wide-eyed adoration while Miss Lanchester carried on.

•  
**Peter Sellers and Sophia Loren.** *A Cheerful Farrago Recorded in London and Rome, with Orchestral Accompaniments Arranged and Conducted by Ron Goodwin.* Produced by George Martin. Angel S-35019, \$5.98.

§AFTER "The Best of Peter Sellers", probably the most expert comedy record ever made, this hasty sequel is rather a disappointment. With Sophia Loren, he performs a couple of light-hearted songs in various accents, including his Indian one, and an item called "Bangers and Mash" where his dialect is Italian and hers is a devastating Cockney, but the skits are less than wonderful. There is one masterpiece—an interview with an Alec Guinness type (Sellers, of course, plays both interviewer and interviewee) of the backstage BBC variety, but a parent-and-schoolmaster discussion on the placement of a child is below par, and a street-corner interview on public opinion over the atom bomb descends to tastelessness. Miss Loren is an engaging singer, even when you can't see her measurements, and there is a fine takeoff on a 1930-ish dance record, complete with surface scratch, yet the disc as a whole is a let-down.

•  
**Gerard Hoffnung at the Oxford Union.**

Recorded in co-operation with the BBC on December 4, 1958. London 5606, \$4.98.

▲TUBA player, cartoonist, and organizer of the hilarious Hoffnung Music Festivals in London, Mr. Hoffnung's literate, old-fashioned humor comes as a soothing welcome after the high-strung American stuff that holds the field today. His advice to tourists visiting Britain ("On entering a railroad compartment be sure to shake hands with all the passengers"), his recital of a series of replies from a hotel proprietor in the Dolomites, full of droll *double entendres*, like a French widow in every bedroom, affording delightful prospects, are civilized as to both subject matter and treatment. He could evoke more than a quiet smile with extended tales, too, like the one included on this record about a series of letters from a benighted bricklayer which might have served as the basis of a full-length scenario for a Laurel and Hardy movie. Unfortunately for British letters, art, music and humor, Mr. Hoffnung died suddenly in 1958. The recording is a rather dim-sounding one made during a lecture he gave, but well worth hearing. It ends in earnest, with some well-taken

remarks urging his listeners to bring about a "proper civilized society" with the government "encouraging the arts" and "no color bar".

•  
**Go To Blazes.** *The Outrageous Wit of Peter Myers and Ronnie Cass.* Elektra EKL-199, \$4.98.

▲MYERS and Cass are a couple of middle-aged anti-status quo madcaps who have written many a London West End revue and are heard here doing some of the routines which have brought protests from the German government, the Egyptians, and England's Lord Chamberlain. They must be given high marks more for ends than means, since the tunes are colorless and the lyrics and monologues tend to sparkle like flat champagne. Even so, their swipes at the German tourists in London who "can't stand racial prejudice or Jews" and their trenchant treatment of such subjects as juvenile delinquency, the Eisenhower administration and nuclear testing are too powerful in their aggressive liberality to be ignored. Once in a while, as in an exceptionally outspoken number on *apartheid*, they come through with a really strong lyric:

"It's called the *apartheid*—  
It's easy to do;  
You just kick the native  
That's nearest to you."

All this is delivered in a breezy, music hall manner. Most of it is powerful, but too crude, direct and close to the barricades to be funny—political diatribe more than comedy.

•  
**2000 and One Years with Carl Reiner & Mel Brooks.** Capitol Stereo SW-1618, \$5.98.

§SOME months ago Mr. Reiner and Mr. Brooks turned out a record featuring an interview of the latter as a two-millennia survivor with a Brooklyn accent. It was funny indeed, although the rest of the disc was filled out with routine stuff. Now they are at it again, and a good try, alas, suffers the fate of most sequels. Mr. Brooks re-creates the character masterfully, but his reminiscences, this time of Shakespeare, Napoleon and the anthems of cavedwellers ("Let 'em all go to hell except Cave Seven") sound like reaching for it. The old man is beginning to show his age. The performers try to top themselves later in another interview, this time with Mr. Brooks as a two-hour-old baby. It is uphill going. Some mirth is wrung from three additional characters—a tax expert, a poet, and a psychiatrist who became a doctor so he could "park anywhere". These prove to be fairly bloodless stones, despite conscientious squeezing.

clash of tempos from start to finish. The impetuous urge in Romeo to love and be loved is more than matched by the urge to kill or be killed if sufficiently provoked, and when the Prince makes the final synthesis—

Where be these enemies? Capulet! Montague!  
See what a scourge is laid upon your hate,  
That heaven finds means to kill your joys with  
love! (V-3)

—the belated understanding of the elders, if that is what it is, finally enables them to resolve the conflict which the lovers could illuminate but not survive. It is a recurrent parable of strife in our world, whether on the local "clan" level, or on the doctrinal, racial, or national level:

*Friar Laurence:* Two such opposed kings encamp  
then still  
In man as well as herbs: grace and rude will.  
And where the worser is predominant,  
Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.  
(II-3)

As Goddard says, "the hatred of the hostile houses in *Romeo and Juliet* is an inheritance that every member of these families is born into as truly as he is born with the name Capulet or Montague. . . They suck in the venom with their milk." But Shakespeare, as always, makes the protagonist much more than a mere innocent puppet, as our duller "social" writers used to love to do.

No competent, professional interpretation, however wrong, could ever make Romeo dull. But by over-sentimentalizing him, and playing up each individual line, each scene, with a minimum of hindsight and foresight, they can certainly make him a far less integrated and human conception than he is by right. Now Sackler has very ably avoided that danger by casting as two of these "angry young" Renaissance men—Romeo and Mercutio—two actors of classical experience who have also been highly successful in portraying the celebrated angry young men of today in the current British plays and films: Albert Finney and Kenneth Haigh. And the elder McMaster has, in the old style, done just the opposite by taking the "juicy" part on himself, with every proclivity which that approach suggests. The billing of these record albums is

therefore quite deceiving. The spotlighted "stars" of Sackler's version are actually co-workers in a taut, thoroughly meshed production (of the sort Cambridge seems to strive for, in its own peculiar and semi-dramatic way, but never achieve), while McMaster, whose name does not even appear on the cover as actor, only as director, is a true star in the old and familiar sense of one to whom all else is subordinated.

Again the opening scene is an accurate barometer of the over-all intent. Romeo's mooning over the fair Rosaline contains such exquisite poetry as to raise that common activity of man to a sublime eminence "illogically" commanding awe instead of ridicule. But that in itself is certainly, as far as the play goes, no reason for introducing it. If the hot-blooded impetuosity and insatiety of young Romeo is not projected along with the poetry, the "choking gall", along with the "preserving sweet" which is McMaster's forte, it is simply a beautiful, time-wasting tableau, or a motiveless cadenza. An actor who gives us, as Albert Finney does, a real crescendo of anger at the mere thought of the "huge waste" of her beauty inflicted by one who lives by Dian's wit, "in strong proof of chastity well arm'd", and will not "stay the siege", is in no danger of merely luxuriating in euphonious sounds instead of fully recreating a great play by (incidentally) the greatest poet. In this respect, Finney is the ablest and most persuasive Romeo to appear on these disks, from his initial poetic sullenness to his final dying, *upward* inflection as he shakes what he has just called "the yoke of inauspicious stars from this world-weary'd flesh". A real anger at injustice to others, not just a sad companionate feeling, erupts again when he reminds the wretched Apothecary that "the world is not thy friend, nor the world's law," (V-1), and this too is obviously right.

The skeleton of another such realization may be heard from Laurence Harvey in the all too brief film excerpts, of which at least the completely preserved balcony and death scenes are well up in the Finney class. For the Old Vic, Alan Badel gives an agreeable interpretation of consider-

able vitality, and also possibly the greatest variation of tempo. His scenes of brief high-spirited wit in the central part of the play are the most mercurial to be heard, thanks to him and his colleagues alike. He has a lively and always intelligent mind. In the lyric and elegiac passages he speaks as softly and deliberately as McMaster, but with no trace of the cloying or sing-song qualities that creep into the latter. Flashes of insight recur, as in his closing adjuration to the Apothecary to "get thyself in flesh", spoken with an involuntary, shuddering empathy which no one else catches. But the corresponding flashes of anger are chiefly lacking in him, and he cannot really convince us, as Finney can and does in the churchyard scene, that "the time and my intents are savage wild." The Cambridge man gives us an earnest and generally capable Romeo that fails to achieve the extra spark of Finney and Badel. Margaret Webster's Richard Waring begins too casually, but soon builds up to a credible and strong Romeo on his own terms.

With Juliet, the problem of interpretation is more complicated in one sense, simpler in another. She is described in the play as being barely fourteen years old, but almost from her meeting with Romeo her utterance, as well as her behavior, is rather that of a woman:

My bounty is as boundless as the sea,  
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,  
The more I have, for both are infinite. (II-2)

One can imagine an adolescent girl of today thinking or saying something like that. But Juliet proves it, which is something less frequently encountered at any time. In the crucial scenes, it is therefore quite a bit easier to suspend our disbelief, when the voice of Juliet is obviously too mature, than it is in the case of Romeo. In the balcony scene, e.g., we either float away with the magical evocation, oblivious of age and time, or we don't; and with the responding magic of Eva Le Gallienne, in the Margaret Webster recording, it is at least possible. Only once or twice we may suddenly return to earth, as when Le Gallienne, having to answer the Nurse's repeated interruptions with growing impatience, lets ring a "By and by I

come!" as stentorian as Lady Capulet or Nurse herself could have mustered.

On the other hand, when an inexperienced girl is "tutored" to it for the cameras, scene by scene, as the 19-year-old Susan Shentall was for Castellani's film, the spontaneity and realism obtained may be countered by other serious problems. Miss Shentall's balcony scene, with the then 25-year-old but highly experienced Laurence Harvey, was one of the most touching and believable ever realized, and is inscribed on the highlight record. In her many lines of distress in the latter half of the play, she tended to speak with a too persistent high-pitched quaver which grew rather mechanical, and which is much more distracting when we only hear her. Visually this casting was a complete and unexampled boon to Castellani's cinematic conception; aurally it is more of a mixed blessing. But her performance and Le Gallienne's, at any rate, set the bounds within which Juliet can be successfully realized.

One of the best compromises to be heard today, combining rich experience with a really youthful-sounding timbre, is the interpretation of Claire Bloom, who plays Juliet in both the Old Vic and the Sackler recordings. Even more illuminating to me than the scene-by-scene comparison of different players of the same role has been the similar comparison of Miss Bloom's interpretations of several years apart — one complete and one abridged, performed against very different conceptions of Romeo and others, and with a very different director. Unlike Gielgud, who displays a gradual lessening of intensity in four successive recordings of the *Hamlet* soliloquies, Bloom exhibits an increase of empathy, in the new Sackler version, which is all the more impressive in that her Old Vic performance already stands head and shoulders above any of the other Juliets here except Le Gallienne's, and in part Shentall's. Dublin's Jillian Gotts and Cambridge's anonymous actress are flat not only by comparison with Bloom, but even with their respective Romeos, which exerts a terrible drag on the productions. Nothing is more deadly than the prolonged, featureless

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mouthings of her lamentations and hopes without real *Einfühlung*; nothing more exciting than their true shaping and inflecting from within. In the Old Vic version of Scene III-2, Bloom bestows more genuine grief on the "poor ropes" that were to bring Romeo to her window than Miss Gotts does on Romeo himself. In these uncut recordings above all, the combination of alert intelligence and deep empathy which Bloom brings to the part is really indispensable.

In one scene, however—her last extensive one before her death scene—Bloom creates a curious dichotomy in her two versions. It is Juliet's fearful soliloquy before the drinking of the suspended-animation potion (IV-3): the "dismal scene" she "needs must act alone". The two almost seem designed to demonstrate how the scene can be done at each of two opposite permissible extremes. The Sackler version mounts to a clamorous and terrible outburst of superstitious fear, as it is usually done on the stage:

...that I  
So early waking, what with loathsome smells,  
And shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth. . .  
etc.

The Old Vic rendition, on the other hand, surprisingly retains a tense, subdued

sense of incipient horror unreleased throughout this 44-line speech, of which only three lines are cut here: a remarkable achievement, whether this is the way to do it or not. But two demonstrations do not equal one performance, and neither can match the sheer terror of Le Gallienne, who combines the best of both in pulsing alternation, to such effect that each outcry is more harrowing, each whisper more charged, than that which preceded. And what is the dramatic purpose of this long peroration, after which Juliet has a mere thirteen lines more in the whole play? Simply, as Hermann Ulrici points out, "to place in clearer light the loftiness of her resolve and the depth of her love and fidelity." "Stay, Tybalt, stay!" she cries at the culmination of her nightmarish fantasy, and immediately upon that: "Romeo, I come! This do I drink to thee." Shentall's scene is too much cut at the climax (though perhaps not unjustly, for that annoying quaver creeps in early), and the other versions can hardly be said to fulfill sufficiently this sublime function of the soliloquy. I think that even for those who were never privileged to see her on the stage, Le Gallienne's album would be worth preserving for this matchless scene alone.

## DISCOTECA

*il mensile italiano di dischi e musica*  
*diretto da William Weaver*

articoli e recensioni di Luigi Dallapiccola, Fedele d'Amico, Toti Dal Monte, Elsa Morante, Alberto Moravia, Thomas Schippers, Tullio Serafin, Giorgio Vigolo

notizie, lettere dall'estero, tecnica

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Next to the balcony scene, the most celebrated passage in the play is Mercutio's Queen Mab speech, and Old Vic's Peter Finch is far and away the best Mercutio of this lot. He and Sackler's Kenneth Haigh get the most support from the high-spirited assemblage of maskers for their Mab fantasy. Those from Dublin (Maurice Good) and Cambridge get none at all, which kills the scene despite the best of their very capable efforts. Haigh is presented as getting a rather grudging hearing for his tale, and then, quite convincingly, winning them over with it. Finch gets the most logical and gratifying of cues, by means of a brilliant interpolation at the beginning which entirely takes the set-speech curse off it, and responds with an uncut peroration of extraordinary timing and eloquence. Even the roar of laughter which accompanies Romeo's interruption gives way with uncanny precision to an ideally timed hush for his coda on "the children of an idle brain". It is one of those effortless accomplishments which seem to have been caught in action and preserved by the luckiest of chances. For present purposes, Haigh and company will more than do, but the former is not erased from the memory by them.

Webster's Dennis King was also very good, in the near-maniac vein of John Barrymore in the earlier, Thalberg-Cukor film. Mercutio's duel and death, as enacted by Haigh and Finch, are the equal of their respective Mab scenes: excellent to superb. The suavely sadistic Tybalt exemplified by Basil Rathbone in the early film has finally given way to the fuming neurotic of Sackler's Christopher Guinee. Either will do nicely to spit out the words—

Now by the stock and honor of my kin,  
To strike him dead I hold it not a sin.  
(1-5)

—but he is also, of course, Mercutio's "courageous captain of compliments". Benvolio, that excellent straight man for Romeo, Mercutio, Prince Escalus and others, fulfills his function well in Dublin's Patrick McLarnon and Sackler's Jeremy Spenser, and with special relish in Old Vic's William Squire. The hoarse, raw-

voiced Apothecary of Sackler's Peter Bayliss I find nearer to my ideal than the conventional quaverer.

In addition to its angry young men, *Romeo and Juliet* also has one superbly angry old man: Juliet's father. No one has more devastatingly portrayed the collapse of the "liberal, broadminded" parent than Shakespeare in the scene in which Lord Capulet, whose "will to her consent" was declared "but a part", loses his temper and pours a flood of ungovernable invective upon his "disobedient wretch" of a daughter—

Mistress minion, you:  
Thank me no thankings, nor proud me no pouds,  
But fettle your fine joints 'gainst Thursday next  
To go with Paris to St. Peter's Church,  
Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither! . . .  
An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend;  
An you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in  
the streets! . . . etc. (III-5)

—and then as suddenly recovers when she seems to relent. It is a marvelous piece of insight, whose irony is increased by the facts that (1) Capulet has no idea his daughter is already married to the scion of the opposing clan, whose presence he has so graciously "tolerated" in his house, and that (2) their meeting was engendered by what we only now see (because we admired him on that occasion) to have been actually another display of parental authority over a rebellious kinsman (his nephew Tybalt):

He shall be endured!  
What, Goodman boy? I say he shall! Go to,  
Am I the master here or you? . . .  
You must contrary me! (1-5)

In these two scenes Shakespeare is again consistent and true to instinctual human behavior, not just to dramatic convenience.

Now Cambridge's Capulet delivers the long tirade against Juliet in the small, piqued tones of an effeminate decorator. This is amusing enough in its own right, but would serve an out-and-out "satirical tragedy" like *Troilus and Cressida* better than this full-blooded, youthful melodrama. I suspect the casting here to be quite accidental, and to illustrate Rylands' preoccupation with ability in diction *per se*, to the detriment of dramatic tone and structure. Montague and Capulet are the patriarchs upon whose mutual

hate a common scourge is laid at the last—quite without the mocking overtones of the mature *Troilus*—and I should think the perfect image of this Capulet to be found in the redoubtably stout, bearded, soft-to-sanguine Sebastian Cabot of the Castellani film who can fan his rage into a tempest, then subside into a pious “This is wisely done” (a line cleverly filched from the Nurse, to be sure), and an hour later a jovial “How now, my headstrong, where have you been gadding?”

This splendid scene was not included in the recorded “highlights”, a fact which Cabot fans should deplore as much as the trimming of the scene in the film itself. Old Vic’s John Phillips, Webster’s Larry Gates, and Sackler’s Michael Alexander are excellent, Dublin’s Milo O’Shea quite good; but with equal room to spread his bulk, Cabot would surely have swept them all from the boards. As for Lady Capulet, her icy “sympathy” can scarcely miss when heard as foil to a properly sanguine Lord. Old Vic’s Yvonne Coulette is the most frigid, especially in the chilling finality of her “Talk not to me. . . for I have done with thee”; Sackler’s Catherine Lacey is more “reasonable”.

Both Friar Laurence and Juliet’s Nurse have some very distinguished representation in these recordings. One ironic note is that the Gate’s Hilton Edwards, whose acting and direction are so sorely missed in the Dublin version, turns up as the Friar in Sackler’s recording, and is assuredly the best one. His long speech to Romeo in III-3 is a high peak of dramaturgy. When he tells him to “take heed, take heed, for such die miserable,” I should think there are scarcely any who will not want to sink into the ground, yet this only prepares for one of the poet’s most sudden and wonderful modulations, his “Go, get thee to thy love as was decreed. . .”, etc. Another amusing coincidence in casting is that Christopher Casson very ably portrays the Friar in Dublin, while his father Sir Lewis Casson is still better in the same part with Old Vic. The O.V., in fact, best catches the playful humor of Laurence’s first scene with Romeo—the sly teasing on the one part

and the “riddling shrift” on the other. Alan Badel, with Sir Lewis’ collaboration, definitely outshines Finney at this point, the first of the only two scenes depicting Romeo in his highest good spirits; his “feasting with mine enemy” enigma is a particular jewel. Anew McMaster’s Romeo, on the other hand, can only be at his least convincing in such a close and witty exchange with a man who is supposed to be three times his own age, but doesn’t sound a day older. McMaster himself would have made a wonderful Friar in anyone’s production; but this is not the way things go in Dublin just now.

Dame Edith Evans is an incomparable Nurse in the Sackler production, imparting a deeply etched individuality to each of her lines that never grows tiresome. In the Old Vic, Athene Seyler is a close runner-up, surpassing Dame Edith in humor in the scene with Mercutio and the others (II-4) by a lighter diction and greater nimbleness. Nancy Manningham is the most exasperating member of the Dublin cast, for she spends the whole of the Nurse’s long part in trying to force her natural voice into a croaky and artificial imitation perhaps of Edna May Oliver in the Thalberg film. The subjugation of dramatic line and movement to mere sound-infatuation would seem to reach its nadir in her humorless exertions. Cambridge again supplies competent but not greatly inspired interpreters for both Nurse and Friar, and the Castellani film a pair of brief but rare gems in Flora Robson and Mervyn Johns. The latter is a perfect agent to prepare for the film’s austere choral ending, with the genuinely tragic tone of his lament that “a greater power than we can contradict hath thwarted our intents.”

I would say in conclusion that it takes an extremely fine production indeed to surpass the Old Vic recording, and that Howard Sackler has succeeded with rare conviction. For those who like to follow the text, Caedmon offers a delight to the eye as well as ear, with its accompanying 110-page book in handsome format and very readable type. This elementary courtesy simply enhances the lead which Caedmon has established at the outset.

# sweet and swinging

By FRED REYNOLDS

OLD ENGLISH professors the world over, from Cambridge to Canton, will be more than happy to tell you that one way not to start out a column is by stating, "I dunno". But really, I don't know. Before me is something sexy and new by Jack Gleason, and the combination of **Lovers' Portfolio** (Capitol SWBO-1619) and Gleason may be the most perfect Martini ever mixed. On the other hand, it may all be stale beer.

It depends on what you like. "Lovers' Portfolio" is an attempt in music by Gleason to spin the smoothest ride from Plymouth Gin to Peaceful Sin that was ever laid into the grooves of two recordings. As the Big One points out: "Inside this portfolio you will find 41 of my favorite melodies pertinent to the perfect evening with someone special. I have also enclosed a special booklet with helpful suggestions for sippin', listenin', dancin', and lovin'. . . Good luck."

To parlay the affair from penthouse to pillow, Gleason employs a Sidecar of light piano music, a shakerful of very good Dixieland jazz, a Stinger of extremely dull society dance music, and a carafe of soulful love music. All of it is encased in a rather stocky portfolio that makes for very bad stacking in anyone's record cabinet.

So, in a vital sense, the album is a real "I dunno". Some of it is quite good, some of it is extremely nondescript. I suppose there are those for whom its accompaniment would accomplish the purpose; with others it has got to be a complete bust. Or maybe the album's effect all has to do with how you feel on a particular night—sometimes it's going to be fine and sometimes it's not. But no matter how the game is progressing, there are several splendid things in Gleason's favor: The man picks superb songs, his albums are beautifully recorded, and whatever he does he does with consummate skill. In its special way, I doubt there could be a better album for Playboys.

This may well be the month in which records have been designed to leave you shakin' your head. For instance, two more new albums in hand are **Radio's Great Old Themes** by Frank DeVol and the Rainbow Strings (Columbia CS-

8413) and **The Madison Avenue Beat** (Epic LN-3796), in which you are supposed to have fun "dancing and listening to America's most familiar music—58 TV and radio commercials." The first is rather nostalgic, the second is a sad commentary on what Americans are continuously exposed to. With both you can entrap your guests into playing the damndest guessing game that ever happened, and you are bound to win. Who's radio theme, we hasten to ask, was *Marta, Seems Like Old Times, Rainbow on the River, On the Radio, Thinking of You, The Waltz You Saved For Me, and Angel's Serenade*? If you were to say Arthur Tracy, Arthur Godfrey, Dr. Christian, Vincent Lopez, Kay Kyser, Wayne King, and Amos and Andy you'd be 100 per cent right, but then the others would still have you hanging over a barrel of memories. If you could tick off Mr. Clean, Blatz, Ipana, Bon Ami, Tetley Tea, TWA, and Beech-Nut Coffee to the tune of their jingles, you'd be only an eighth or so through the barrage of Lanin-orchestrated commercials on one recording. After a while it becomes a continuous bore.

In Mercury's "Perfect Presence Sound" series is **The Best of Cugat** by, of all people, Xavier Cugat and His Orchestra (PPS-6015). While Cugat's orchestra, orchestrations and instrumentations haven't changed much since the Civil War, the recorded sound has and so has the album cover. So while here is a case of Cugie's band playing in the same old way such same old songs as *Taboo, Amor, Amapola, Misirlou, Always in My Heart, and Mama Inez*, the sharpness of the same old songs in the same old way on recording has never been more pronounced, and nobody ever made a more provocative album cover than six Abbe Lanes.

Capitol continues to make the most of its repertoire. Reissued in "Duophonic" sound, a simulated stereo process, is **Baxter's Best** (DT-1388), on which you will find such famous Les Baxter instrumental hits as *The Poor People of Paris, Quiet Village, and Unchained Melody*; and **Sounds of the Great Casa Loma Band** (DT-1588), re-creations by a later-day

Glen Gray of original Casa Loma favorites such as *Memories of You*, *Casa Loma Stomp*, *Smoke Rings*, *No Name Jive*, and *Dance of the Lame Duck*. Both of these are good to have around again. Better still are Billy May's authentic re-creations of eleven Jimmie Lunceford classics. **The Great Jimmie Lunceford** is a full-dimensional stereo recording (ST-1581) in which Billy May's band brings back to swinging memory *Tain't What You Do*, *Ain't She Sweet*, *My Blue Heaven*, *Charmaine*, *Uptown Blues*, *Well All Right Then*, *Blues in the Night*, *I'm Walking Through Heaven*, *For Dancers Only*, *Cheatin' on Me*, and *Rhythm Is Our Business*.

Since we've hit on both Billy May and Glen Gray, there's additional cause in mentioning Capitol's **Shall We Swing?** (ST-1615), wherein Glen Gray's band swings—and I do mean swings—Billy May's unique arrangements of or from the Brahms *Hungarian Dance No. 5*, Paderewski's *Minuet*, Mozart's *G minor Symphony*, Dvořák's *Humoresque*, Suppé's *Poet and Peasant Overture*, Rubinstein's *Melody in F*, Franck's *D minor Symphony*, Beethoven's *Minuet in G*, and Ponchielli's *Dance of the Hours*. This kind of thing has been tried a number of times in the past. Often, as in the case of both Tommy Dorsey and Artie Shaw, it has been successful. But never has there been such classical-swinging-fun on one recording. Billy May, when he's right, can tickle. And Mr. May was playin' the shots expertly on this one. I don't say this is an album for everyone, but for those with both a sense of humor and a love of a swinging band, maybe you'd better tuck this under your belt.

Keely Smith and Louis Prima may be terrific on the stage of a Las Vegas nightclub, especially if you happen to be half-crocked. But on records Keely leaves me rather cool, and Prima, as far as I'm concerned, is a raucous slob. Since the latest Smith-Prima platter—**Return of the Wildest** (Dot DLP-3392)—contains one vocal by Keely, one duet, three instrumentals, and seven Prima vocals, it is recommended that you pass it by with no more than a burp.

In passing I can't help mentioning two new RCA Victor albums that caught my ear—Perry Como's **Sing To Me Mr. C** (LSP-2390) and Harry Belafonte's **Jump Up Calypso** (LSP-2388). Both are excellent. It has been more than a year, I believe, since Como cut an album for Victor. He sings beautifully and smoothly on this new album, which is largely composed of groups of medleys. No doubt you know that Belafonte hasn't

made a new calypso album since his initial million seller. Harry had other well-planned things to do in the six-year meantime and simply did not wish to get tagged as merely a calypso hack. There was no danger of that anyhow, for the man is one of the most talented entertainers ever to walk the face of this earth. "Jump Up Calypso", with the wonderfully funny *Monkey* and the exciting, drum-thumpin' *Goin Down Jordan*, is great Belafonte.

An album of high good cheer is Warner Brothers' **Roarin' Piano of Joe "Fingers" Carr** (WB-W1423), in which Carr, the Girls from The Club 16 (They'll remind you of the Hot Box Girls in "Guys and Dolls"), the Wildcat Jazz Band (Eddie Miller, Dick Cathard, Red Callender, Skeets Herfert, etc.), and the Harmony Boys (They'll remind you of the old team of Van and Schenck of the Silver Slipper Clubs) get together for a rousing go-round with thirty crackerjack songs of the fabulous 20s.

Several months ago Pete Rugolo came out with the album, "10 Trumpets and 2 Guitars", which found warm praise from this corner. Now Mercury has released the second of his "Perfect Presence Stereo" albums, **10 Trumpets and 2 Guitars** (PPS-6016). It just doesn't have the rich warmth of the initial effort. Perhaps that's because of the trumpets, which too often screech for the sky. Both Candoli brothers are among the blowers, and I've never cared for either one. Most of the songs are good, particularly *Whispering*, *Cherry Pink* and *Apple Blossom White*, *Sugar Blues*, *Hot Lips*, and *Struttin' with Some Barbecue*. This is one of those affairs with lots of ups and downs. When the trumpeters are under wraps, the record strikes a fine mood; when they are not, it's off in left field shattering glass.

One final note concerning RCA Victor's latest by Al Hirt—**Al (He's the King) Hirt and His Band** (LSP-2354). This has Al's first Victor thing lashed to the mast. This one swings. This one doesn't have Henri René's strings, but a swinging New Orleans band powered by Hirt, and good old landmarks like *One O'Clock Jump*, *Jazz Me Blues*, *Laura*, *Three Little Words*, and *The Old Folks at Home*. Hirt himself is much more at home in the familiar jazz band surroundings, and as a result he plays far better jazz. He seems settled down to having a ball, with not the need to blow spectacularly to make up for the lack of swingers around him. On this recording his playmates are indeed swingers, and the whole thing comes on like gangbusters.

# Unlikely Corners

**WHY NOT LOOK** below the surface occasionally and find out what it is in the direct appeal of the popular tune which makes the audience go home whistling; to see if there is not some artistic impulse hidden in unlikely corners. . .

—Ralph Vaughan Williams

**G**EORGE BERNARD SHAW I think it was—or was it Edward Jablonski?—anyway, some critic or other said, and I quote, "Show me a critic who insists that he is objective and I'll show you a liar." Generating this sage observation was a suggestion from someone that critics should not review records for which they have no feeling. "Understanding" I think the word was. What's to understand? A song strikes me as good, or it doesn't; an interpretation pleases me or it doesn't. The adviser after all was merely saying, though not in so many words, "only review records you like." Understanding has nothing to do with it. When a critic reviews a record, or a book, or a play, you must assume he has some understanding, or at least an interest in whatever it is.

Critics need not understand their subject: witness the multitude of jazz critics who are mystifying musicians with their comments on the art. One need only react to it and he is a critic. Not a good one, perhaps, certainly not an important one, but as good as most. The best critic, I feel, is one who stirs up enthusiasm for something or someone, and the hell with objectivity and that other critical obsession, integrity. Critics are by definition dishonest, it seems to me—otherwise why aren't they doing honest labor? You can think of any number, offhand, and find that many critics are "specialists", which means they are either buggy on a single subject or a favorite "artist" (a much abused word these days, especially in popular music and jazz). Much as I like him don't tell me Sinatra is an artist—a great popular entertainer, yes, but an artist, no. This is perhaps hair-splitting (criticism is an art devoted to hair-splitting, second only to scholar-ism), but it always does some good to split a few.

Again, I "understand" Elvis Presley, but I wouldn't want him to marry my sister, nor would I want a full collection of his records in the house. I "understand"

a lot of the modern jazz men, but I don't find their jazz as attractive as the good old-fashioned stuff (remember Jimmy Yancey?), which I am told now wasn't really jazz at all. Thus the critics. For the record, shall we say, I like the Miles Davis "Porgy and Bess" album, but feel that his "Sketches of Spain" album is a travesty. On the other hand Miles Davis may already be passé and I'm only confessing my antiquation. But enough of my running off at the mouth. Now I'll review records, although I suppose the following is typical of my prejudicial approach.

▼  
**THE IMMORTAL Victor Herbert** (RCA Victor 8LSC-2515), as is usual with a company devoted to conserving the status quo, breaks no new musical ground, but even so here is a very pleasant album. The singing is done by the fine Robert Shaw Chorale, out of which from time to time emerges an excellent solo voice. Shaw also conducts the accompanying orchestra. And now we come to the meat of the record, for the arrangements are the work of Robert Russell Bennett, who is himself a kind of immortal. Back in the earlier days when musical comedy was called operetta Bennett was already turning out his artful arrangements, a few of them for Victor Herbert. Mr. Bennett quite properly points out in the liner notes that as far as arrangements went, Victor Herbert could very well do his own. It was quite an honor to have the great man choose you when he found himself too busy. Bennett's arrangements are as excellent as you'd expect, but they are more than that. They are true to the style of the music. This record is a fine recollection of another era. Among the songs: *The Streets of New York*; *Every Day is Ladies' Day*; *Tramp, Tramp, Tramp*; *Toyland*—what'd you expect?

Mr. Bennett is conductor as well as arranger-orchestrator of yet another volume of the seemingly endless Richard Rodgers score, **Victory at Sea, Vol. III** (RCA Victor © LSC-2523). It still holds up, it seems to me. The album itself is fairly elaborate, with pictures, etc. The record not only contains the music but also some of the sounds of the fighting, which, I suppose, makes it also what fastidious writers would call "an historic document". (I'd call it a historic document). Side 2 contains a "Symphonic Scenario" of the entire score employing the four important highlights: *Song of the High Seas*, *Beneath the Southern Cross* (No Other Love, of course), *Guadalcanal March*, and *Hymn of Victory*.

I must say I liked the cover of **And Here She Is—Ann Margaret** (RCA Victor LPM-2399), on which this quite sparkling girl cavorts in those skin-tight pants that seem to be the thing these days. She has fine long legs, and the rest of her to match. She can't be a day over twenty. Lustrous black hair, pretty face. She is Ann Margaret. I must admit she is just my type—vivacious, lovely, young. She even sings, more or less. Miss Ann (or is it Miss Margaret?) is long of limb, but a little short of voice, frankly. She can sing, however, in a small girl's voice (I guess she's too old to be cast as *Lolita*), or at times in the delivery, if not the voice, of Lena Horne. Give her time and she may become a major singer. But she is something to look at (I think she has been cast in the upcoming film "State Fair").

Speaking of the movies, here's an album titled **Immortal Music from the Movies** (Capitol ©ST 1599) employing the talents of no less than Whittmore and Lowe, the piano duo, plus chorus and orchestra. This is a nice album, as nice albums go, but I would argue with the usage of the first word in the title. The playing is first-rate, however (though I'd have been happier if the team had used the time on a new recording of the Vaughan Williams Piano Concerto). We are given pretty much of the same old thing—"GWTW", the theme from *Moulin Rouge*, *Lili*, quite a lot of good Victor Young items (*Stella by Starlight*, *Love Letters*, *For Whom The Bell Tolls*) and the excellent Alfred Newman theme from *How Green Was My Valley*.

Also in hand is an album made up of excerpts from other albums, **Great Motion Picture Themes** (United Artists 3158), which means UA has borrowed from some of its sound track albums—*Misfits*, *Elmer Gantry*, *Never on Sunday*, *God's Little Acre*, etc. The hope may be that, once you've heard a piece of the action, you'll run out and get the whole bit. Alas, often as not the piece is all

there is to it to begin with. Anyway, you can sample the stuff here and decide for yourself. UA did sneak in a couple of items, such as the theme from "*Porgy and Bess*", from a jazz album, and the *Bonanza* theme from television.

Perhaps the proper attitude toward the whole thing is best displayed in **José Melis in Movieland** (Mercury ©-60648), in which the pianist joins an orchestra in some very sprightly renditions of the same old movie themes—from *High Noon* to *Makin' Whoopee*. The playing is scintillating, the orchestrations are clever and always interesting. It is refreshing to hear those movie themes played as if they are not movements from a lost symphony of Beethoven.

Also exciting is the evocative music composed, and conducted by, Nelson Riddle from the television show **The Untouchables** (Capitol ©T-1430). Riddle imaginatively recaptures the mood of the music of the period—the twenties and thirties—without sacrificing his own personal contribution. *Speakeasy Blues*, for example, is quite modern rather than a typical blues; but *Ebony and Ivory* is quite twenties-ish.

A very enjoyable album is **Lawrence Goes Latin** (United Artists 3114) featuring the voice of Steve Lawrence and a raft of bongo-ish arrangements. Most of the selections are tastefully drawn from show scores and/or film scores: *It's All Right With Me*, *Everything's Coming Up Roses*, *The Sound of Music*, *Out of This World*, etc. Well sung, too. The highly ignorant mistakes on the liner crediting songs to the wrong composers, however, has wrung my librarian's heart.

Here are a few worth-while bargains: **You Were Away** (Richmond B-20068) in which Eric Rogers, his orchestra, and chorus present a dozen songs from the years of World War II—*Gal in Kalamazoo*, *I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen*, *The Last Time I Saw Paris* and the like. Nicely done. Also from Richmond comes **Irma La Douce and Bells Are Ringing** (B-20089) as performed by the London Repertory Company. Each takes up one side of the record, therefore this release is really no substitute for the original cast albums. Rather, it is a run-through of the better known songs from each show. Well sung, too.

Finally, here's an album called **Peanut Butter** (Arvee 428) sung by a group called The Marathons. The contents of the album is a travesty on current popular song. If that was so intended, then this is a very important album. I understand the title song is (or was) a great hit. My copy of the album is stamped all over "NOT FOR SALE—Property of Manufacturer." It should remain so. —E.J.



# READERS' RECORD EXCHANGE & MART

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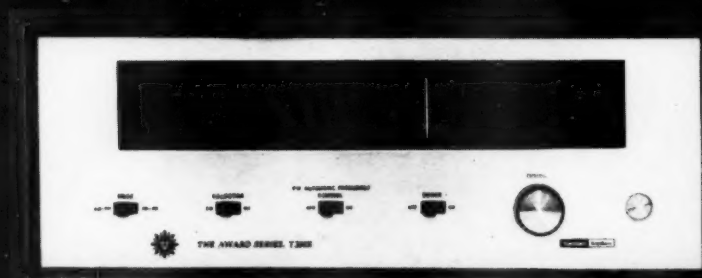
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